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Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe

Alsace and the Frankish
Realm, 600–1000

Hans J. Hummer

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POLITICS AND POWER IN EARLY
MEDIEVAL EUROPE

How exactly did political power operate in early medieval Europe? Taking Alsace as his focus, Hans Hummer offers an intriguing new case study on localized and centralized power and the relationship between the two from c. 600 to 1000. Providing a panoramic survey of the sources from the region, which include charters, notarial formulas, royal instruments and Old High German literature, he untangles the networks of monasteries and kin-groups which made up the political landscape of Alsace and shows the significance of monastic control in shaping that landscape. He also investigates this local structure in light of comparative evidence from other regions. He tracks the emergence of the distinctive local order during the seventh century to its eventual decline in the late tenth century in the face of radical monastic reform. Highly original and well balanced, this work is of interest to all students of medieval political structures.

HANS J. HUMMER is Assistant Professor of History, Wayne State University. He has published articles in a number of journals, including *Early Medieval Europe*, *Francia* and *Deutsches Archiv*.

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Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000

HANS J. HUMMER



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For Sara, Genevieve and Peter

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book examines the operation of political power in early medieval Europe, with Alsace as a focus. It explores the networks of monasteries and kin-groups that formed the basis of the local political order, and the connections between local power and the political centre between approximately 600 and 1000. The study draws upon a variety of sources primarily from Alsace, namely charters, notarial formulas, royal instruments, hagiography and Old High German literature, but also upon comparative evidence from other regions, to show how this distinctive local order took shape during the seventh century and came to an end in the late tenth century with the emergence of radical monastic reform. These basic local networks provide the backdrop for interpreting the progress of Carolingian consolidation in the eighth and ninth centuries, the processes of political fragmentation in the latter half of the ninth century and the transformation of aristocratic power during the Ottonian period.

Academic studies are never exclusively the result of one's own effort, and this book is no exception. As is perhaps fitting for a study that deals with issues of kinship, associative alliances and institutions, this one rests on the kind support of a wide network of family, friends and funding agencies. I owe the deepest gratitude to my spouse, Sara, and two children, Genevieve and Peter. It goes without saying that I asked for much, and they willingly gave, although importantly not without insisting that the personal relationships that invest study, work and career with meaning continue to develop and grow. I thank the members of my family of origin, who contributed to who I am: my parents, Lloyd and Mardeane Hummer, my late mother, Dorothy Hummer, and my four sisters and two brothers, and their families. I am also grateful for the encouragement and understanding of my wife's parents, Bill and JoAnn Drews, and her five sisters and their families. Then there is the family of Pat and Mary Geary, who have become like extended relatives to us.

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Preface and acknowledgements

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

a.	anno
a. (in maps and tables)	ante
<i>AB</i>	<i>Annales Bertiniani</i>
<i>AF</i>	<i>Annales Fuldenses</i>
<i>ARF</i>	<i>Annales Regni Francorum</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Diplomata</i>
<i>KIII</i>	<i>Karoli III</i>
<i>Karol.</i>	<i>Karolinorum</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>Ludowici Germanici</i>
<i>LoI, LoII</i>	<i>Lotharii I, Lotharii II</i>
<i>Merov.</i>	<i>Regum Francorum e Stirpe Merowingica</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
<i>OI, OII, OIII</i>	<i>Ottonis I, Ottonis II, Ottonis III</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores</i>
<i>SRG</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum</i>
<i>SRM</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>Trad. Freising</i>	<i>Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Freising</i>
<i>Trad. Wiz.</i>	<i>Traditiones Wizenburgenses</i>

INTRODUCTION

In 1049 the great reform pope, Leo IX (1049–54), embarked on an ambitious itinerary north of the Alps to root out simony and clerical corruption. In the midst of a pressing schedule of councils, this former bishop of Toul paid a visit to his homeland, to ‘sweet Alsace’ as his biographer called it. There, Alsace’s famous son dispensed blessings, relics and papal privileges to a number of reformed monasteries throughout the region, among them Altdorf, Hesse and Woffenheim which, as Leo proudly recalled, had been founded by his own kin, the so-called lords of Dabo and Eguisheim.¹ In his grants to two other monasteries, Lure and Hohenburg, the pope was strangely oblivious to even deeper ancestral ties. For if Leo had emerged from the line of Dabo and Eguisheim, he and his near ancestors also were the direct descendants of a more ancient kin-group, the Etichonids, who had arisen in the seventh century, produced an illustrious line of dukes in the eighth century and been the patrons of Lure, Hohenburg and at least nine other Alsatian monasteries, but who had been transformed around the millennium into a new family, the lords of Dabo and Eguisheim.

Eclipsing Leo’s view of his recent Etichonid heritage was a profound revision in his ancestors’ lordship in the late tenth century, a revision which marked the transformation of a distinctive political order in early medieval Alsace stretching back to the seventh century. As kin-groups such as the Etichonids founded and patronized monasteries, whose unique burden it was to replicate the permanence of the divine order on earth, they had encouraged the growth of institutions whose proprietary endowments formed the material basis of stable and enduring networks of lordship. Indeed, the kin-groups that rose to prominence

¹ Hans Hummer, ‘Reform and Lordship in Alsace at the Turn of the Millennium’, in Warren Brown and Piotr Górecki eds., *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture* (Burlington, Ver., 2003), pp. 69–84, esp. pp. 69–70, 80–1.

during the early medieval period, whether their dominance was realized on the local, regional or supra-regional levels, were those that successfully cultivated a local basis of power in this way. With the advent of radical monastic reform in the tenth century, the Etichonids' identity, which was closely bound up with their patronage of monasteries, was swept away.

As the pope's activities might indicate, the cultivation of lordly power in early medieval Alsace also was integrally connected to the larger story of power in early medieval Europe. Alsatian monks and lords never operated in a vacuum; their rights and privileges were inextricably tied to the legitimizing authority of popes, kings and emperors. These representatives of the political centre in turn sprang from families whose power and influence was based on the kinds of associative networks pervasive in Alsace, so that the extension of broader political authority was predicated on the possibilities inherent in monastery-based lordship. Thus, if the formation of the lineage of Dabo and Eguisheim was tied to the emergence of reformed cloisters, and if the fate of the Etichonids had been bound to an archipelago of earlier foundations in Alsace, the prestige of these ecclesiastical institutions likewise was dependent upon the grants dispensed by popes and kings, both of whom in 1049, it turns out, were kinsmen to one another and had arisen from families deeply implicated in the patronage of local monasteries.

Needless to say, the problem of power has long occupied the attention of early medieval historians. Some have devoted themselves to elucidating the formal political, military, judicial, legal and ecclesiastical structures through which Frankish officials, especially those of the Carolingian Empire, the most ambitious and successful political unit of the early middle ages, attempted to rule.² Others have found this view incomplete, even unsatisfying. The notion of a system of governance directed from the political centre, they caution, can give off the impression that early medieval kings simply delegated authority to subordinates and exercised power through discrete public institutions. Attention to actual practice, as opposed to prescriptive exhortations, appears to reveal that early medieval kingdoms lacked the salient feature of a state: a routine administration coordinated by a ruler and his representatives. Thus, a countervailing

² Heinrich Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1887–92); Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire*, trans. Giselle de Nie (Amsterdam, New York, Oxford, 1977); François L. Ganshof, *Frankish Institutions under Charlemagne*, trans. Bryce and Mary Lyon (Providence, 1968); *Feudalism*, 3rd edn, trans. Philip Grierson (New York, 1964); and Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family Who Forged Europe*, trans. Michael I. Allen (Philadelphia, 1993); and Bernard Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia, 2001).

tradition has long called attention to the limitations of early medieval 'government'.³

Skepticism about maximalist views of governmental organization and the attractions of social history have combined to generate an alternative vision of the past that has emphasized less formal conduits of power. Over the last couple of decades, some historians have shifted the focus away from the agency of kings to the primacy of local context, from formal institutional and political history to custom, kinship, gift-exchange and compromise justice. Influential has been the work of the so-called Bucknell group in Britain⁴ and of a group of American social historians dubbed with some exaggeration by French medievalists as the 'new school of American medieval history'.⁵ According to this view, power was exercised most regularly at the local level, and it is there, social historians have argued, that we must look if we wish to grasp the essential stability of medieval society.

While this fruitful work has succeeded in evoking the vitality of medieval organization independent of formal politics, it in turn has raised additional issues for scrutiny. The close examination of the local social context has brought historians face to face with local institutions, local power brokers, their ties to one another and the relevance of royal authority for the perpetuation of political order. Consequently, the formal elements that social historians have been tempted to set aside as epiphenomenal have reasserted themselves as integral to the formulation of power. Governance in early medieval Europe might have been less abstract by comparison with bureaucratically ordered societies, but its political landscape included formal institutions (especially ecclesiastical ones),

³ Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire*, trans. Peter Munz (orig. pub. 1957; reprint: Toronto, 1978); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West: The Early Middle Ages A.D. 400-1000* (New York, 1962); Timothy Reuter, 'Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series, 35 (1985), pp. 75-94.

⁴ Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre eds., *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1986); in particular, Ian Wood, 'Disputes in Late Fifth- and Sixth-Century Gaul: Some Problems', pp. 7-22; Paul Fouracre, '"Placita" and the Settlement of Disputes in Later Merovingian Francia', pp. 23-44; Janet L. Nelson, 'Dispute Settlement in Carolingian West Francia', pp. 45-64; Wendy Davies, 'People and Places in Dispute in Ninth-Century Brittany', pp. 65-84; Chris Wickham, 'Land Disputes and Their Social Framework in Lombard-Carolingian Italy, 700-900', pp. 105-24; and Patrick Wormald, 'Charters, Law and the Settlement of Disputes in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 149-68.

⁵ Patrick J. Geary, 'Vivre en conflit dans une France sans état: Typologie des mécanismes de règlement des conflits (1050-1200)', *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 42 (1986), pp. 1107-33; Patrick J. Geary, 'L'humiliation des saints', *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 34 (1978), pp. 27-42; Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1992); William I. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990); Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of St. Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca, 1989); and Stephen D. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050-1150* (Chapel Hill, 1988).

political offices and law codes; and its kingdoms possessed a central focus in the person of the king and his court. The authority wielded by kings might appear at times to have been weak and uneven, but it was active, it was both feared and revered, and it was exercised often enough with jarring ruthlessness to ensure a measure of compliance.

It is now less evident that social analysis of non-prescriptive sources, the so-called 'documents-of-practice', can recover the hard, as opposed to propagandistic, reality of medieval society. In these postmodern times not only have such sources turned out to be as rhetorically charged as prescriptive texts,⁶ albeit in a different way, but when we examine the circumstances surrounding their production, we often discover that they appear to be the debris left over from struggles for power at the highest levels of early medieval society. This does not mean that documents of practice cannot be used to do traditional social history, but it is to say that the circumstances that provoked documentation often provide clues to the contact points between high politics and local affairs.

The accumulation of research emanating from Germany has made it eminently clear that royal power cannot simply be marginalized as a contaminating artefact. Long preoccupied with issues of political constitution, German medievalists have investigated with ever greater subtlety the relationship between the long dominance of the aristocracy and the evolving manifestation of royal power. As a part of the effort to work out the composition of the aristocracy, they have developed the prosopographical methods and source-critical techniques that have made it possible to work out the connections that run from the highest levels of authority to the lowest.⁷ This sophisticated work has established the crucial place of kingship in the maintenance of aristocratic power at all levels.

⁶ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum* 65 (1990), pp. 59–86; and Paul Freedman and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies', *American Historical Review* 103 (1998), pp. 677–704.

⁷ Gerd Tellenbach, *Zur Bedeutung der Personenforschung für die Erkenntnis des früheren Mittelalters*, Freiburger Universitätsreden, Neue Folge, 25 (Freiburg, 1957); Karl Schmid, 'Der "Freiburger Arbeitskreis": Gerd Tellenbach zum 70. Geburtstag', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 122 (1974), pp. 331–47; 'Programmatisches zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Personen und Personengruppen', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 8 (1974), pp. 116–30; Hagen Keller, 'Das Werk Gerd Tellenbachs in der Geschichtswissenschaft unseres Jahrhunderts', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), pp. 374–97, esp. pp. 389–92; Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Gruppen in der Gesellschaft: Das wissenschaftliche Œuvre von Karl Schmid', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), pp. 410–35; Timothy Reuter ed. and trans., *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (Amsterdam, 1978); John B. Freed, 'Reflections on the Medieval German Nobility', *American Historical Review* 91 (1986), pp. 553–75; and Stuart Airlie, 'The Aristocracy', in R. McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, c. 700–c. 900 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 431–50.

Introduction

Over the last decade some investigators have begun to confront anew the problem of political order in the Frankish world by integrating the rich work of social historians on kinship, property-holding and dispute resolution with the scholarship on the aristocracy.⁸ In essence, these historians argue that the crux of the matter is in the details: because an abstract government did not exist, insights into the operation of politics in the early middle ages must be won from close analysis of local contexts. These studies demonstrate that the investigation of a particular locality can never simply be constituted as the study of a discrete region, disconnected from wider politics, but necessarily entails the investigation of power ecumenically. This approach has essentially revealed that the flow of royal power was both enabled and regulated by local networks of power.

I shall draw pragmatically from the wisdom of statist and processualists to delineate the outlines of political order in early medieval Europe, with Alsace as my focus. Although the Carolingian era looms large in the following pages, the study is not limited to that period.⁹ The weight of scholarship has established the seventh and eleventh centuries as the proper termini for the early medieval era, both of which pre- and postdate the Carolingian period proper. The prodigious research on late antiquity has made it abundantly clear, implicitly or explicitly, that Henri Pirenne was right, if for the wrong reasons: the seventh century rather than the fifth marked the end of antiquity.¹⁰ I will begin then not with a Roman

⁸ Warren Brown, *Unjust Seizure: Conflict, Interest, and Authority in an Early Medieval Society* (Ithaca, 2001); and Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000). See also, Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre eds., *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1–16, 245–71; and individual articles there by David Ganz, ‘The Ideology of Sharing: Apostolic Community and Ecclesiastical Property in the Early Middle Ages’, pp. 17–30; Ian Wood, ‘Teutsind, Witlaic and the History of Merovingian *precaria*’, pp. 31–52; Paul Fouracre, ‘Eternal Light and Earthly Needs: Practical Aspects of the Development of Frankish Immunities’, pp. 53–81; Janet Nelson, ‘The Wary Widow’, pp. 82–113; Paul Wormald, ‘Lordship and Justice in the Early English Kingdom: Oswaldslow Revisited’, pp. 114–36; and Timothy Reuter, ‘Property Transactions and Social Relations between Rulers, Bishops and Nobles in Early Eleventh-Century Saxony: The Evidence of the *Vita Meinweri*’, pp. 165–99.

⁹ On the problem of the Carolingian period as a distinct era, see the pessimistic view of Richard E. Sullivan, ‘The Carolingian Age: Reflections on Its Place in the History of the Middle Ages’, *Speculum* 64 (1989), pp. 267–306; and the more optimistic assessment of Janet L. Nelson, ‘Presidential Address. England and the Continent in the Ninth Century I: Ends and Beginnings’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series, 12 (2002), pp. 1–22.

¹⁰ Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. Bernhard Miall (orig. pub. 1939; reprint: Totowa, 1980); Eugen Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973)*, 2 vols., ed. Hartmut Atsma, Beihefte der *Francia* 3/1–2 (Zurich, 1976–9); Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York, Oxford, 1988); Walter Goffart, ‘From Roman Taxation to Mediaeval Seigneurie: Three Notes’, *Speculum* 47 (1972), pp. 165–87, 373–94; Reinhold Kaiser, *Das römische Erbe und das Merowingereich*,

order that had ceased to exist, but with a close treatment of the late Merovingian period when a fundamentally different order based on networks of monasteries and kin-groups coalesced.

This early medieval order held sway until the eleventh century, when it underwent profound transformation. The literature here is enormous and sharply debated, but suffice it to say for the moment that although historians disagree on the extent of change, a range of studies written from a variety of perspectives has established that Europe experienced deep and abiding change between Carolingian times and the emergence of the high medieval monarchies and an autonomous Church by the twelfth century.¹¹ It is important to stress that, although these changes may not have been unconnected to the transformation of the Carolingian world in the tenth century (at least in some areas),¹² they fit only uneasily with the narrative of the collapse of the Carolingian Empire in others.¹³ In many areas, such as Alsace, the posited transformations noticeably post-dated the end of the Carolingian era.

If the seventh and the eleventh centuries mark off the early middle ages as a distinct epoch, then we should be able to account for its coherence with positive evidence. That is, the early medieval period should not simply present a convenient space to trace out the vestiges of a dying Roman order or the emergence of monarchical government in the twelfth century, as is often the case with those working on either side of the period, and even by some working within it. The rulers, prelates

Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 26 (Munich, 1993); Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce A.D. 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001); Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trans. John J. Contreni (Columbia, S.C., 1976); Chris Wickham, 'The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism', *Past and Present* 103 (1984), pp. 3–36; and Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London, New York, 1994).

¹¹ On the west, see Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 2 vols., trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago, 1961); Richard W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven, London, 1953); Robert Fossier, *Enfance de l'Europe, X^e–XII^e siècles: Aspects économiques et sociaux* (Paris, 1982); and Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation 900–1200*, 2 vols., trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York, 1991). For Germany, see Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*, trans. R. F. Bennett (orig. pub. 1940; reprint: Toronto, 1991); Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge, 1993); Hagen Keller, *Zwischen regionaler Begrenzung und universalem Horizont: Deutschland im Imperium der Salier und Staufer, 1024 bis 1250* (Berlin, 1986); and Stefan Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*, trans. Barbara M. Bowls (Philadelphia, 1999). On Europe in general, see Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (Princeton, 1993); and Robert I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970–1215* (Oxford, 2000).

¹² Chris Wickham, 'Society', in Rosamond McKitterick ed., *The Early Middle Ages: Europe 400–1000*, *The Short Oxford History of Europe* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 90–4.

¹³ See now Simon MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2003).

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and aristocrats of the early middle ages created and perpetuated a coherent political order which – whether they realized it or not, but which we, who have the advantage of hindsight, can nonetheless see – was neither merely a survival of late classical forms nor a prelude to bureaucratization in the high middle ages. In early medieval Alsace, this order flowed from a distinctive symbiosis of familial, ecclesiastical and royal interests.

Aspects of early medieval society that we might conceive of as sociological – custom, networks of kinship and friendship and gift-exchange – are crucial for understanding the formulation of this political order. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that these ‘informal’ processes were not necessarily more fundamental than other factors, because the networks that bound people to one another, so far as we can access them, were often mediated by formally constituted institutions. Any treatment of associative networks should blend what we retrospectively distinguish as formal and informal modes of organization. Although I shall use such terms as ‘local’ and ‘central’, ‘political’ and ‘social’, and ‘family’ and ‘monastery’, I do not use them to represent oppositions whose dialectical interaction somehow can be seen to drive historical change. They are merely analytical, meaningful for differentiating the larger Frankish polity from its constituent parts and for identifying patterns of activity in terms that we as outside observers might recognize. Indeed, they are useful for helping us to understand that the distinctions we reflexively draw between local and central power, social and political history, and formal and informal processes are difficult to sustain in an early medieval context. Under the pressure of analysis, general and local order often turn out to be two sides of a coin, political and social life are often indistinguishable, and the relationships between families and the monasteries they patronized were extraordinarily fluid and in any case mutually reinforcing.

I also will de-emphasize the distinction between lay and ecclesiastical interests, as many early medievalists have been doing more systemically.¹⁴ Scholars long have pointed out that almost all the sources that survive from the period were preserved by ecclesiastical institutions and so reflect ‘church’ interests. A typical strategy for overcoming this bias has been to abstract from the sources the (lay) society that must have existed beyond the monastery.¹⁵ While there is some justification for trying to fill out the wider world encoded in the sources, at least for understanding the

¹⁴ Mayke De Jong, ‘Introduction: Rethinking Early Medieval Christianity: A View from the Netherlands’, *Early Medieval Europe* 7, 3 (1998), pp. 261–75.

¹⁵ Chris Wickham, *The Mountains and the City: The Tuscan Apennines in the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988); and Wendy Davies, *Small Worlds: The Village Community in Early Medieval Brittany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1988). On the tendency to overlook the ecclesiastical agency behind the documentation, see David Herlihy’s review of Wickham’s *Mountains and the City*, *Journal of*

contingencies of power, it is by no means clear that one can understand the long continuity of aristocratic power without moving ecclesiastical institutions, which were responsible for our sources, into the centre of the story, not simply as objects of aristocratic activity but as something integral to the structuring of power. In the early middle ages, lay and ecclesiastical spheres were coordinating, rather than subordinating, entities, populated by the same class of aristocrats linked together by networks of friendship and kinship. Monasteries were founded by families who sent their sons and daughters to staff their foundations as monks and nuns and even to administer them as abbots and abbesses, so that the webs of kinship that formed the matrix of this society encompassed both religious and lay persons. Monasteries never simply advanced their own interests; they remained wealthy and vibrant only so long as they attended the interests of their lay and royal patrons.¹⁶

Finally, because a central bureaucracy did not exist in the early medieval period, any investigation of political order needs to be approached from the local context. This strategy is not to be confused with the regional monographs pioneered by Georges Duby in France or by the practitioners of *Landesgeschichte* in Germany, many of whom have pursued detailed analysis quite consciously at the expense of broader political history.¹⁷ The popularity of both types of regional history may have its origins in anxieties about political centralization in the modern period, in the search for intimacy and belonging in an increasingly impersonal and bureaucratized world.¹⁸ Nor is it to be confused with centre-periphery studies. These can be useful for investigating the relationship between the Frankish empire and its marches¹⁹ but are less helpful for understanding a system of internal order mediated by local frameworks. Rather, the local arena is simply the place where one is best able to view the interplay of Frankish politics at all levels.

Interdisciplinary History 19 (1989), pp. 662–4. The tendency is also evident in the research on memorial sources, a primary goal of which has been to elucidate (lay) aristocratic groups, see Gerd Althoff, *Adels- und Königsfamilien im Spiegel ihrer Memorialüberlieferung* (Munich, 1984); and more recently Uwe Ludwig, *Transalpine Beziehungen der Karolingerzeit im Spiegel der Memorialüberlieferung*, MGH Studien und Texte 25 (Hanover, 1999).

¹⁶ Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 77–134; and John Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia c. 850–1000* (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁷ Georges Duby, *La société aux XI^e–XII^e siècles dans la région mâconnaise*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1971); Pankraz Fried ed., *Probleme und Methoden der Landesgeschichte* (Darmstadt, 1978); and John B. Freed, 'Medieval German Social History: Generalizations and Particularism', *Central European History* 25 (1992), pp. 1–26.

¹⁸ Howard Kaminsky and James Van Horn Melton, introduction to Otto Brunner, *Land and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria* (Philadelphia, 1992), trans. Howard Kaminsky and James Van Horn Melton, pp. xvii–xxvii, xxxix–xliv.

¹⁹ See for example, Julia Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians* (Cambridge, 1992).

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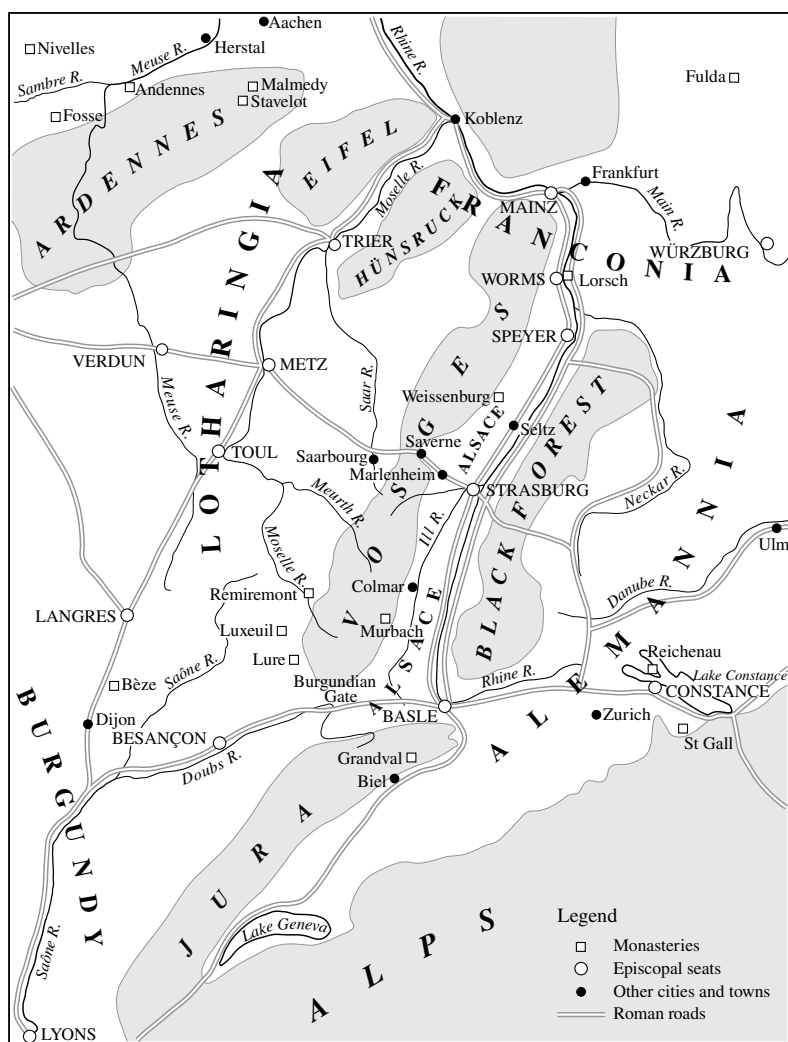
ALSACE AND THE VOSGES

The unique political geography of Alsace lends itself to a fruitful analysis of the issues of centre and locality posed in this book. The region was advantageously located in the middle of Frankish Europe and open to influence from the surrounding centres of power: to the north lay the Frankish heartlands of the mid-Rhine and Ardennes regions, to the east, the powerful dukedom of Alemannia, to the southwest, the Merovingian kingdom of Burgundy, and to the west the Meuse-Moselle basin, which formed the heart of the ninth-century kingdom of Lotharingia (see map 1). Consequently, the Alsatian territories stood at the nexus of several critical frontiers within early medieval Europe whose frequent ruptures have exposed the inner workings of the Frankish order to the inquiring eyes of investigators.²⁰ We shall examine these divisions more closely as they present themselves but, briefly, during the seventh century they ran along the frontier between the Merovingian kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy, and along the upper-Rhine frontier between Austrasia and Alemannia, a subordinate but frequently rebellious dukedom. In the Carolingian period, Alsace hosted the revolt of Charlemagne's grandsons against their father Louis the Pious (814–40) and subsequently became a bone of contention along the frontier between the eastern and western Frankish kingdoms. On the other hand, Alsace was at various stages either left largely to its own devices, as was the case during the late Merovingian period; free from disturbance and fully integrated into the Carolingian Empire, as was the situation during the long reign of Charlemagne (768–814); or open to direct royal control, as happened during the late Carolingian and Ottonian periods. In sum, the area is ideal for investigating the interactivity of local networks, royal power and episodic centralization throughout the early medieval period from a variety of perspectives.

The *pagus Alsatie*, the 'district of Alsace', first emerged in the immediate post-Roman period, probably in the sixth century. The term 'Alsace' derives, as best as philologists can decipher, from an old Germanic phrase, *ali-land-sat-ja*, which meant 'one who sits in another land'.²¹ It

²⁰ On early medieval Alsace, see Heinrich Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß I: Politische Geschichte des Landes von der Landnahmezeit bis zum Tode Ottos III. und Ausgewählte Beiträge zur Geschichte des Elsaß in Früh- und Hochmittelalter*, ed. Traute Endemann (Sigmaringen, 1991); Christian Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace et la légende de sainte Odile* (Paris, Nancy, 1892); Fritz Langenbeck, 'Probleme der elsässischen Geschichte in fränkischer Zeit', *Alemannisches Jahrbuch* (Lahr, 1957), pp. 1–132; Michael Borgolte, 'Die Geschichte der Grafengewalt im Elsaß von Dagobert I. bis Otto dem Großen', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 131 (1983), pp. 3–54; and Dieter Geuenich, Edward Sangmeister, Heiko Steuer and Béatrice Weis, 'Elsaß', in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd edn, vol. VII (Berlin, New York, 1989), pp. 175–88.

²¹ Béatrice Weis, 'Elsaß: Namenkundliches', in Geuenich et al., 'Elsaß', pp. 175–7.



Map 1 Alsace and the surrounding territories

presumably referred to the Alemanni who lived on the left bank of the Rhine, but the term appears first only in the seventh century, in Fredegar's chronicle.²² The *pagus* extended from just south of Weissenburg in the north to the Burgundian Gate in the south, and

²² Fredegar, *Chronicon Quae Dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici Libri IV cum Continuationibus*, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH SRM 2* (Hanover, 1888), bk 4, c. 37, p. 138.

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encompassed the plain between the upper Rhine to the east and the Vosges mountains to the west. Frankish Alsace was slightly smaller than its modern equivalent, and only in the tenth century was it subdivided into two districts, the *Nordgau* and the *Sundgau*. The *pagus* probably descended in some way from the old Roman administration of the area, which by the third century AD had divided the territories west of the upper Rhine into several *civitates*.²³ Although the antique city-based administration had largely disappeared by the seventh century, the Roman imprint remained deeply etched into the region. The dioceses of Strasburg and Basle, which were patterned after the *civitates*, provided the ecclesiastical administration of northern and southern Alsace, respectively. Frankish Alsace also had inherited from its Roman past an impressive system of roads which ran the length of the Rhine and linked the area to the mid-Rhine region, the former Danube provinces and the Alpine passes beyond. To the west, the roads cut through the Burgundian Gate, penetrated the Vosges at the Saverne gap, and thereby linked Alsace to Besançon and the Saône-Rhône corridor, and to Metz and the Moselle basin, respectively. Late Roman emperors, many of whom spent whole careers defending the Rhine frontier, developed an extensive network of imperial residences and fiscal lands which formed the foundations of the Frankish royal estates. In Alsace, these royal lands were concentrated in the north around the old *civitas* of Brumath and the Roman fortress at Seltz, in the central regions around Strasburg and the palace at Marlenheim, and in the south near Colmar and Basle. The infrastructure of roads, estates and palaces provided an attractive framework for the organization of Frankish lordships and royal power in Alsace.

Although Alsace was open to influences from beyond, its geographical coherence and its peripheral status with respect to the neighbouring centres of power meant that it also possessed a strong local character. The lands immediately east of the Rhine, between the river and the Black Forest, were not so well developed. The centre of Alemannic power lay farther east, between the Danube and Lake Constance, and only in the eleventh century was the Black Forest settled on any scale. The Frankish kings maintained a higher profile in the two poles of Frankish power, the Paris basin and the mid-Rhine territories, although in the early seventh century, and again after the mid-ninth century, the royal presence in Alsace was quite pronounced. The highly developed infrastructure, the relative isolation from political turbulence and the richness of the local

²³ Cf. Anthony King, *Roman Gaul and Germany* (London, 1990), pp. 54–62, 153–71; and John F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC–AD 260* (Ithaca, 1983), p. 93 ff.

agricultural economy probably help to explain the impressive resilience of Alsatian lordships.

The promising ecology of early medieval Alsace – ripe for exploitation by virtue of its well-developed infrastructure – offered much to sustain an emerging lordship or monastery. The fertile loess soils of the plain yielded abundant harvests of cereal crops, the rolling hills beyond nurtured a promising viticulture, and the Vosges mountains provided the rivers and streams that watered the hill country and the alluvial flats. The broader plain north of Strasbourg is scored by a number of short, west-to-east-running rivers that flowed into the Rhine: from the north, these were the Lauter, the Sauer, the Moder, the Zorn and the Brusche. Southern Alsace is drained principally by the Ill, which flows southwest to northeast, from the Burgundian Gate to Strasbourg. The Vosges did not isolate Alsace from the lands immediately to the west; rather its broad and accessible valleys attracted intensive settlement, especially during the seventh century, when an impressive array of monasteries was founded by enterprising aristocrats and Irish holy men.²⁴ The exploitation of the vast mountain forests and constant communication among the monasteries drew the surrounding populations into an interdependence which was manifest in the close connections that bound the powerful kin-groups on either side of the massif to one another.²⁵

Since Neolithic times, settlements have accumulated in the foothill regions and plains surrounding the Vosges near rivers and streams.²⁶ The Roman period witnessed a busy phase of settlement, especially during late antiquity when the military build-up attracted Roman provincials and barbarians from beyond the Rhine. Place names reveal the Alemannic and Frankish dominance of the area in the post-Roman period, although this most likely was wrought by the implantation of Frankish lordships, rather than the large-scale relocation of population.²⁷ Miracles of modern civil engineering now allow towns to crowd the river banks with impunity, but in pre-modern times villages were more commonly situated on higher ground near minor, rather than major, rivers, safely removed from

²⁴ Joel Schweitzer, 'Apport pour une étude de l'Alsace rurale au Haut Moyen Age', in Jean-Michael Boehler, Dominique Lerch and Jean Vogt eds., *Histoire de l'Alsace rurale* (Strasbourg, 1983), p. 73.

²⁵ See below, chapter 1, p. 37.

²⁶ On rural settlement and economy, see André Thévenin and J. Heim, 'La préhistoire'; and François Petry, 'Les campagnes en Alsace de l'époque celtique à la fin de la période romaine', in Boehler et al. eds., *Histoire de l'Alsace rurale*, pp. 23–39, 43–69, respectively. See also Madeleine Chatelet, 'L'évolution du peuplement entre la Zorn et la Bruche durant le Haut Moyen Age', in Bernadette Schnitzler ed., *Vivre au Moyen Age: 30 ans d'archéologie médiévale en Alsace* (Strasbourg, 1990), pp. 132–8.

²⁷ Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 49–71; cf. Heiko Steuer, 'Elsaß: Frühgeschichte', in Geuenich et al. 'Elsaß', p. 182; and Dieter Geuenich, 'Elsaß: Historisches', in Geuenich et al., 'Elsaß', p. 185.

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the violence of floods. The inhabitants of these villages tilled rich fields of wheat, rye and barley, cultivated small orchards and vineyards, grazed cattle, sheep and pigs, raised chickens and gardened vegetables; and they turned this agricultural produce into bread, meat, lard, eggs, cheese and apples to eat, beer and wine to drink, and leather and wool to wear. While the crops grew and the animals grazed, the inhabitants fished the waters and hunted wild game.

They also exploited the thick forests for other valued resources.²⁸ The Vosges are flanked by mixed deciduous and coniferous woods and crowned with conifers, except in the highest elevations of the southern Vosges, where the sandstone has eroded to expose the granite core of the massif.²⁹ These bald mountain tops are well suited to shepherding; the broad Vosges valleys, to agriculture and animal husbandry. The vast forest of the highlands and surrounding plains provided pasturage for pigs; they were gleaned for firewood, nuts, mushrooms, herbs, and wild apples and berries, exploited for timber, their animals trapped for furs, and their bee hives plundered for honey and wax. Yet for all its wealth, the forest was a place of dread: its treasures were not free for the taking, but were guarded by ill-tempered bears, wolves, foxes and wild boars. The battle between humans and the environment, and the effort to tame the forest sometimes structured the dramas in early medieval hagiography. The *Life of Columbanus*, for example, celebrated the adventures of the eponymous heroic Irish saint who, while taming the wild forests of the southwestern Vosges, ordered marauding bears from their dens, repelled the attacks of terrorizing wolves, scolded thieving birds and affectionately played with squirrels.³⁰ The power of God was not the only weapon against these ferocious and cunning beasts; the spear worked well too: the Vosges forests also were home to some of the favourite hunting preserves of Frankish kings.³¹

The Vosges linked Alsace to the rich agricultural zones beyond: the cool and wet cereal-producing areas of the Moselle basin to the west and northwest, and the comparatively more temperate, cereal and

²⁸ Chris Wickham, 'European Forests in the Early Middle Ages: Landscape and Land Clearance', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 37 (Spoleto, 1990), pp. 479–545.

²⁹ On the geography of the Vosges, see Etienne Juillard, *Altas et géographie de l'Alsace et de la Lorraine (la France rhénane)* (Paris, 1977), pp. 119–37; Georges Chabot, *Géographie régionale de la France*, 3rd edn (Paris, 1975), pp. 238–42; Hilda R. Ormsby, *France: A Regional and Economic Geography*, 2nd edn (London, 1950), pp. 329–30, 377–80.

³⁰ Jonas of Bobbio, *Vitae Columbani Abbatis Discipulorumque Eius Libri II*, in Bruno Krusch ed., *Jonas Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Johannis*, MGH SRG (Hanover, Leipzig, 1905), pp. 1–294; bk 1, cc. 8, 10, 15, 17, 27; pp. 166–7, 169, 181, 178–9, 185–6, 216.

³¹ Charlemagne and Louis the Pious avidly hunted there, *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1895), a. 805, 817, 821 and 825; pp. 120, 147, 155, 167.

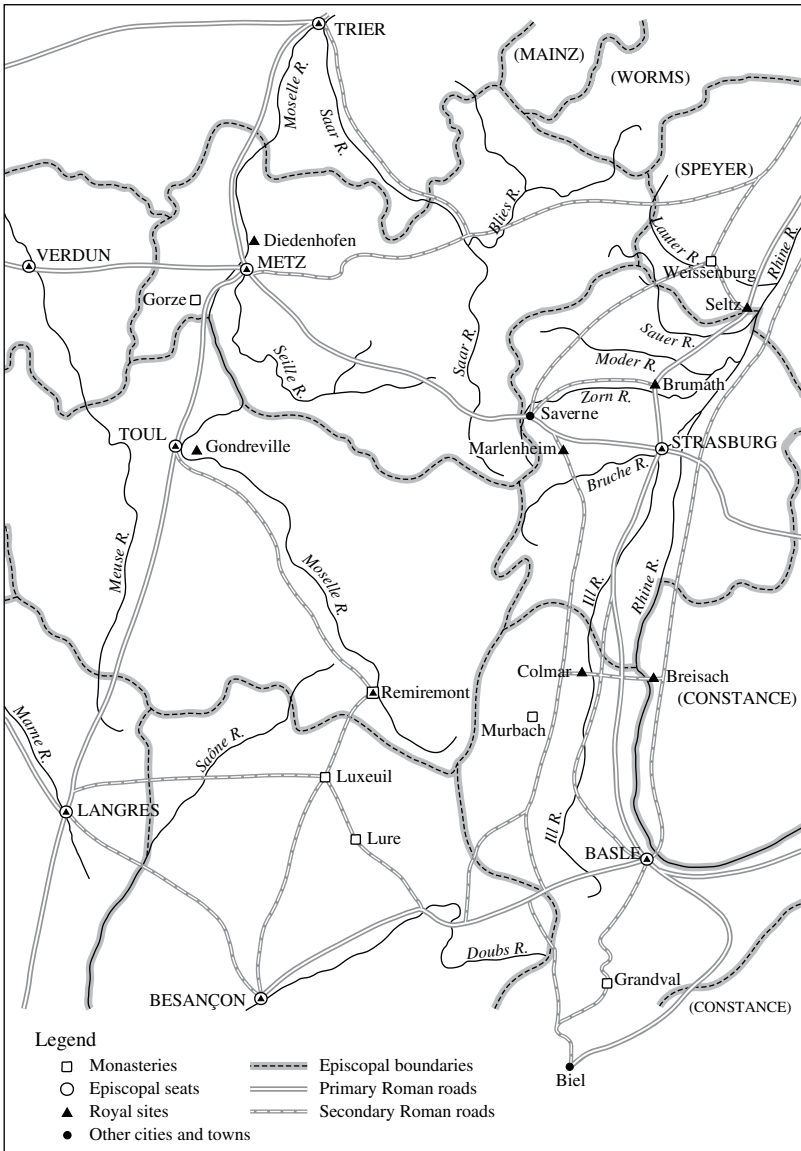
vine-growing regions of the Saône basin to the southwest.³² The upper-Moselle territories west and northwest of the Vosges lack the starker geological features of Alsace; they form, rather, a transitional zone that links the scarp lands of the Paris basin to the block-mountain systems, such as the Vosges, that form the ramparts of the Rhine valley. Here the transition from mountains to lowlands is less drastic: the Vosges dwindles into forested hills and vales, scarp-edged plateaux and broad valleys that gradually melt into a higher elevation plain. The plain is bounded and drained by two major rivers: on its western edge by the Moselle, which arises in the southern Vosges; and on its eastern edge by the Saar, which flows out of the central Vosges just south of the Saverne Gap, runs north along the hill country abutting the Vosges and eventually empties into the Moselle near Trier. The Moselle and the Rhine, which meet at Koblenz, form a waterway that nearly encircles the Vosges. The weather, the hills and the plain of the upper-Moselle basin combine to yield rich and productive lands for the cultivation of cereals, and lush meadows and pasturage for the grazing of cattle. In modern times, the area has become famous for its rich deposits of coal and iron; in the early middle ages it was exploited rather for another important mineral, salt, which is entombed in the plains and accessible at the surface in shallow pans and basins.

The Burgundian Gate separates the Vosges from the Alpine Jura mountains to the south and forms a gap that joins the upper Rhine basin to the Saône-Doubs watershed to the southwest. The exposed granite core of the southern Vosges falls steeply to the foothills of the Gate, the Jura gradually by a series of descending plateaux. As the Saône flows south, the lands on either side become increasingly more productive and broaden into the Burgundian Plain, where it receives the waters of the Doubs just south of Dijon. The Doubs arises in the Jura and winds its way north through forested mountain valleys to the Gate. In geological ages past, it flowed thence to the Rhine, but today turns abruptly southwest, rounds the Jura massif, winds its way through pastoral plateau country to Besançon, and then on to the Burgundian Plain. The Saône continues south to Lyons, where it meets the Rhône. Together, the Saône and Rhône valleys form a north-south corridor that extends uninterrupted from the southern Vosges to Provence.

Similar to the upper-Rhine region, these territories had been organized in Roman times into administrative *civitates*. As one moves clockwise around the Vosges massif, these cities were, from the north: Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Brumath (near Strasbourg), *Augusta Rauricorum* (near Basle), Besançon, Langres, Toul, Metz and Trier. With the Christianization

³² Chabot, *Géographie régionale*, pp. 221–61, 273–81; Ormsby, *France*, pp. 261–80, 323–40, 353–89.

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Map 2 Episcopal boundaries of the Vosges region



Map 3 The districts and monasteries of the Vosges and adjacent regions

of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, these cities – with the exceptions of Brumath and *Augusta Rauricorum*, which were superseded in importance by Strasbourg and Basle, respectively – became the seats of ecclesiastical dioceses (see map 2). All were connected by a network of roads

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which looped the Vosges and bisected it with a route that ran through the Saverne Gap and connected Metz to Strasburg. Similar to Alsace, the trans-Vosges regions were organized into rural districts sometime during, or immediately following, the late Roman period. From the north, the nine districts that encompassed the Vosges region were the Bliesgau, the Speyergau, Alsace, the Alsegau, the Portois, the Chaumontois, the Albegau, the Saulnois and the Saargau (see map 3). These districts, or several of them together, at times seem to have been coextensive with the authority of a count, although they were by no means primarily administrative in character.³³ They commonly served as neutral, geographical designations in comital, royal or monastic documents to identify the location of property. Most took their names from topographical features, e.g. the *pagus Saroinsis*, the 'Saar district', which encompassed the Saar river basin; or from the names of secondary towns, e.g. the *pagus Albinsis*, which was derived from the town *Alba*, or as it is known today, Blâmont. As with Alsace, these districts first came to light in the seventh century, when their existence is illuminated by monastic charters.

THE SOURCES

Perhaps because of its favourable geography and fruitful ecology, Alsace has left – by the standards of the period at any rate – an abundance of sources, in particular monastic charters which record the property transactions between patrons and monasteries that allow us to investigate the elaboration of social and political networks.³⁴ The extant documentation is unevenly distributed, so that most of the monasteries, especially those on the western flank of the Vosges, are poorly documented and remain beyond the reach of examination. While the weight of evidence is centred on Alsace, the sources do offer some coverage of southern Lotharingia, northeastern Burgundy, the mid-Rhine region and, now and again, Alemannia east of the Rhine. Thus, the Vosges massif and its impinging areas form the regional core of this study.

Although it has been fashionable to use charters either to infer a family's private holdings or to demonstrate that aristocrats patronized monasteries

³³ Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 8–9.

³⁴ *Traditiones Wizenburgenses: Die Urkunden des Klosters Weissenburg 661–864*, ed. Karl Glöckner and Anton Doll (Darmstadt, 1979); *Regesta Alsatie aevi Merovingici et Karolini, 496–918*, ed. Albert Bruckner (Strasburg, Zürich, 1949); *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Gorze, MS 826 de la Bibliothèque de Metz*, ed. Armand d'Herbomez, *Mettensia* 2 (Paris, 1898); and *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Strasburg*, vol. I: *Urkunden und Stadtrechte bis zum Jahr 1266*, ed. Wilhelm Wiegand (Strasburg, 1879).

to forge connections to patron saints and thus enhance their prestige, I am going to emphasize the institutional basis that monasteries provided for early medieval lordships. I have found very few charters – from the Vosges region at any rate – that show people giving property to a saint. Even in these few cases, the charters do not really say the donor was giving property to a saint, but rather to the ‘party of saint so-and-so’, i.e. to a chapter of monks. What I find in the overwhelming majority of charters is something like this: ‘I so-and-so in the name of God and for the love of Jesus Christ and the remission of my sins give, donate and confirm to the monastery such-and-such, which was built in the district such-and-such near the river such-and-such in honour of saint(s) so-and-so and where the venerable bishop/abbot so-and-so presides.’ While I do not wish to deny that an act of saintly veneration lurks somewhere in all of this, I do wish to draw attention to something so obvious in these property contracts that many have overlooked it: these people were bargaining with the representatives of formal institutions, the presence of which exerted a powerful influence on the shape and fate of kin-groups.

Alsace, it should be said, probably was not unique in this respect. Donations to the church of Freising in Bavaria, for example, also were made to the institution – to the ‘church of St Mary’. Although patrons to St Emmeram in Bavaria, Gorze in Lotharingia and Fulda in Franconia were likely to donate their property to the ‘holy martyr who resides at the monastery’, this was not always the case, and they might also donate to the institution. The variation between giving to an institution or a saint probably is not a reflection of widely divergent practices, but rather to the presence of a local martyr, as at St Emmeram, Gorze and Fulda, or the absence of one, as at Weissenburg, Murbach and Freising.

The greatest concentration of extant charters from Alsace comes from the monastery at Weissenburg, whose *Kopialbuch* provides the most extensive collection.³⁵ This cartulary, or codex of charters, contains copies of 272 property transactions in Alsace and southern Lotharingia which range in date from 661 to 864. With the exception of one document, which was forged in the twelfth century,³⁶ the charters appear to be straightforward copies of earlier records. The cartulary also includes three charters, nos. 273–5, which were copied in during the eleventh century.³⁷ Two of these record later transactions, although one, no. 273,

³⁵ See above, n. 34; and Franz Staab, ‘Weissenburger Traditionen (Traditiones Wizenburgenses)’, in *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. Adalbert Erler et al., 37. Lieferung (Berlin, 1994), columns 1235–9.

³⁶ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 51. ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 516–19.

reproduces a ninth-century transaction and will be considered with the main body of charters. Many of the peculiarities of this source will be treated in the following chapters but, briefly, the volume represents one of the earliest cartularies in two important respects. The volume is one of the oldest extant cartularies: whereas the codices that survive from most other monasteries were put together in the high or late middle ages, the cartulary of Weissenburg was assembled around 860. The unspoken principles that guided the selection and organization of its contents are, therefore, genuinely early medieval and a valuable source for illuminating the views and uses of property in the mid-ninth century. Secondly, many of the charters copied into the cartulary are impressively early. Charters in the other major early medieval collections date to after 740 or 750, which is roughly coincident with the consolidation of Carolingian authority.³⁸ The cartulary of Weissenburg contains a steady flow of charters from 693 on and thus, in contrast with charters from other regions, allows us to take the measure of the local situation before the extension of Carolingian power into the area.

Noteworthy is a particular subset of charters – precarial transactions and conditional gifts, the principal mechanisms by which early medieval families were able to retain control over the property they donated to monasteries.³⁹ By definition, a *precaria* was a request for usufruct of property. Its legal origins remain unclear, but the early medieval *precaria* probably developed out of the freely revocable Roman *precarium*, vulgar Roman contractual practices, and various types of heritable property cession.⁴⁰ The mark of a precarial document is the request clause in which a suppliant makes a petition (*petitio/postulatio*) or asks (*preco/suplico*) that the beseeched party grant (*praestaretis*) or permit them to hold (*tenere permitteretis*) specified property in usufruct. The beseeched party was expected to accede to the request, since documents often indicate that they ‘should grant’ (*prestare debuistis*) the requested

³⁸ Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 87–98.

³⁹ Alfons Dopsch, *Die Wirtschaftsentwicklung der Karolingerzeit vornehmlich in Deutschland*, 2 vols., 2nd edn (orig. pub. 1921–2; reprint: Cologne, Graz, 1962), vol. I, pp. 103–11, 202–29; Friedrich Lütge, *Die Agrarverfassung des frühen Mittelalters im mitteldeutschen Raum vornehmlich in der Karolingerzeit* (Jena, 1937; reprint: Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 219–29; Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 48–56; Laurent Morelle, ‘Les “actes de précaire”, instruments de transferts patrimoniaux (France du Nord et de l’Est, VIII^e–XI^e siècle)’, *Mélanges de l’école française de Rome: Moyen âge* 3, 2 (1999), pp. 607–47; and Barbara H. Rosenwein, ‘Property Transfers and the Church, Eighth to Eleventh Centuries: An Overview’, *Mélanges de l’école française de Rome: Moyen âge* 3, 2 (1999), pp. 563–75.

⁴⁰ Werner Ogris, ‘Precaria’, in Adalbert Erler and Ekkehard Kaufmann eds., *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. III (Berlin, 1984), pp. 1885–6.

properties.⁴¹ In some precarial charters an explicit petition is missing. In these cases, the precarial nature of the transaction is revealed by the humility of the suppliant who acknowledges, in several variations – ‘because of your clemency you have granted those properties in usufruct’ or ‘your piety brought it about that you grant those things to me under usufruct’ – the freedom of the grantor to dispense the property.⁴²

The overwhelming number of surviving precarial formulas and charters involve requests for use of ecclesiastical property. Usually this property had just been given to a monastery or a church by a patron, who then made a petition for lifetime use. Some precarial grants might contain a clause that stipulated a renewal of the lease, most commonly every five years, but these are quite rare.⁴³ After the death of the petitioner, the property reverted by agreement to the grantor, although some charters and formulas might stipulate continued use for closely related kin, such as spouses, children, nephews or grandchildren.

Precarial grants have misled more than a few researchers who have taken the documents at face value and concluded that when the stipulated heirs expired, the property reverted to the monastery and was lost to the family. However, these provisions worked like a roll-over clause, so that when, say, the grandchildren received the grant, their *precaria* would have included stipulations for their children and grandchildren to take up the grant, and so on *ad infinitum*. Anecdotal evidence suggests as much and, besides, medieval values would have compelled monasteries to share their largess far beyond the second or third generation.⁴⁴ To hoard wealth was to be greedy; it was to be like the dragon in *Beowulf*: alone, despised and friendless. Dragons might be able to get away with their outrageous unwillingness to share, but monks could not fly and breathe fire, so they had to continue to share out the property given to them if they ever hoped to enjoy support and command protection in this bellicose society. In other words, monks would well have understood that precarial transactions were constrained by the interests of their lay patrons for generations, so long as close kin were still around to claim the properties.

⁴¹ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 50–1; *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 125; *Formulae Augienses, Collectio B*, in Karl Zeumer ed., *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi, MGH Legum sectio 5* (Hanover, 1886), pp. 347–64: no. 5.

⁴² Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 52.

⁴³ I am not aware of any in actual charters from the Vosges region; for the exceptions among notarial formulas, see *Formulae Bituricensis*, in *Formulae Merovingici*, pp. 166–81: no. 2; *Formulae Turonenses*, *ibid.*, pp. 128–65: no. 7; *Formulae Salicae Lindenbrogianae*, *ibid.*, pp. 265–84: no. 3.

⁴⁴ Provisions for descendants are especially emphatic in Alemannic formulas and charters, see for example, *Formulae Augienses, Collectio B*, no. 8, which makes provisions for descendants ‘into eternity’; and Hermann Wartmann, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Abtei Sanct Gallen*, 4 vols. (Zurich, 1863–1931), vol. I: 700–840, no. 80.

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This is why most surviving transactions involve precarists making requests for property either they or their kin had donated, although it was possible to petition for use of additional ecclesiastical property to which there was no prior family connection.

According to notarial formulas, a *precaria* was followed by a *prestaria*,⁴⁵ or a grant, sometimes called a *commendaticia*,⁴⁶ in which the grantor agreed to the request, granted the property 'in benefice' or 'in *precaria*' and then repeated the conditions of the tenure listed in the *precaria*. The terms of the *prestaria* mirror those of the *precaria*, the only difference being that a *precaria* might sometimes contain stipulations which prevented the grantor from interfering with the property while the precarist was using it. Very few pure prestarial charters have survived, but if notarial formulas are a fair guide, the prestarial grant was the third part of a three-step process of gift-exchange: a party gave property to an ecclesiastical institution in return for prayers, and then petitioned the monastery to grant usufructuary rights for life. The monastery agreed to the request, promised to pray for the donor and then repeated the conditions of the lease. Ideally, the transaction would have generated a copy of three documents for each party – a donation charter, a precarial charter and a prestarial charter.⁴⁷ *Precariae* and *prestariae* might stipulate payment of a yearly *census*, or rent, in kind or coin, though this was not always the case. (The reasons for this variation will be taken up in chapters 3 and 4.)

Similar to the *precaria* was the conditional gift.⁴⁸ In these donation charters, a party made a gift 'on the condition that' (*in ea ratione ut*) the recipient allow the giver to use the property in benefice until death, at which point the grant was to revert to the receiving party. Like the *precaria*, the conditional gift might include provisions for heirs to assume the benefice, require a yearly payment for right of use or include a request to use property previously given by a third party.⁴⁹ Conditional gifts were not followed by a *prestaria*, since continued use of the donation was a condition of the gift, not a request which required a separate grant of permission. It is impossible to delineate any functional difference between the conditional gift and the donation-*precaria*-*prestaria*. Both appear in

⁴⁵ On *prestariae*, see Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 48–50; and Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. I, pp. 103–10.

⁴⁶ *Commendaticia* is the preferred term in Salic formulas: *Formulae Salicae Bignonianae*, in *Formulae Merowingici*, pp. 227–38: no. 22; and *Formulae Salicae Merkelianae*, *ibid.*, pp. 239–64: nos. 6, 8, 35, and 37.

⁴⁷ *Formulae Senonenses*, *ibid.*, pp. 182–226: nos. 14/15/16 and 31/32/33; *Formulae Salicae Lindembrogianae*, *ibid.*, nos. 1–2/3/4. The pattern can also be inferred from the *Marculfi Formulae Libri II*, *ibid.*, pp. 32–112: bk 2, nos. 4/5 (donation/*precaria*) and 39/40 (*precaria*/*prestaria*).

⁴⁸ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 48–9, 53–4. ⁴⁹ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 79 and 151.

formula collections and both are used in actual charters. The choice of form may have been a matter of preference on the part of the donor, the recipient or the notary. The Weissenburg charters, for example, include instances of the same individual using both forms.⁵⁰ The lack of a functional difference might explain the eventual collapse of the conditional gift and *precaria* into one form. In the Alsatian and Alemannic formulas of the late ninth century, the tripartite donation-*precaria*-*prestaria* and the uni-documentary conditional gift disappeared and were replaced by a conditional gift and a '*precaria*', which recorded a grant, not a request.⁵¹ That is, for whatever reason, the *precaria* disappeared, the conditional gift required an assenting grant for continued use, and this grant was now called a *precaria* rather than a *prestaria*.

In addition to charters, the patronage activities of early medieval Alsations are vividly depicted in the biographies of saints, many of whom arose from the same kin-groups that endowed the hagiographers' monasteries. These texts provide insight into the stories, ambitions and ideals of families, monks and nuns, and more broadly into the culture of piety that infused property transactions. These lively sources can be exploited either for basic narrative material or at a more general level for values and assumptions, or both.⁵² Those written long after the events they purport to describe usually are limited in their usefulness to the latter capacity. Others, in particular Merovingian productions, many of which form the documentary residues of factional politics, have long been a staple of historical reconstructions of that era. The hagiographer's didacticism and taste for miracles do pose obvious challenges even in 'historical' *Lives*, but most often these are problems of interpretation rather than outright fabrication. So long as we keep in mind the tension between the historian's search for human motives and the hagiographer's deference to divine agency, these 'problems' can be controlled easily enough.

⁵⁰ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 206 and 208 (Helidmunt); 204 and 268 (Gebolt); and 200 and 270/271 (Lantfrit).

⁵¹ *Formulae Augienses*, *Collectio B*, nos. 2/3, 4/5, 6/7, 14/15; *Formulae Sangallenses Miscellaneae*, in *Formulae Merovingici*, pp. 378–90: nos. 2/3, 14/15; *Collectio Sangallensis Salomonis III*, *ibid.*, pp. 390–433: nos. 6/7, 8/9.

⁵² František Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit* (Prague, 1965); Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. edn (Princeton, 1990), pp. 3–43; Paul Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), pp. 3–38; Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640–720* (Manchester, New York, 1996); Jo Ann McNamara and John E. Halborg with E. Gordon Whatley ed. and trans., *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, N. C., 1992); Heinzelmann, *L'hagiographie*; Julia Smith, 'The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780–920', *Past and Present* 146 (1995), pp. 3–37; and Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head eds., *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1995).

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The history of early medieval Alsace also can be filled out with royal instruments, narrative sources, law codes and a smattering of Old High German literature. Royal instruments include capitularies, i.e. ad hoc edicts and directives, as well as diplomas, which established grants of immunity from secular jurisdiction, privileges, protection or donations of property to monasteries. Once viewed as evidence of the erosion of public authority in the early middle ages, these grants, especially immunities, actually testify to the continuing relevance of royal authority in local affairs.⁵³ Together with the narrative sources, they can be used to work out connections between local power brokers and the royal court, and between Alsace and the wider Frankish realm. Law codes are used sparingly mainly because those that impinge on Alsace, Frankish Salic law and Alemannic law unfortunately have little to say about the donation of property to churches and monasteries. They do shed light on the rules governing partible inheritance and exchanges of property upon marriage, both of which form an important context for interpreting some of the motives behind ecclesiastical gifts. I shall make extensive use of other normative sources, the charter formulas, which were arranged into collections, or formularies, that provided monastic scribes with a range of notarial paradigms. The generic form of these documents allows one to compensate to some extent for the discontinuities in the charter evidence. Vernacular compositions are almost exclusively limited to glosses, versifications of the Bible and translations of basic Christian prayers. Nonetheless, Alsatian monasteries made major contributions to a budding Old High German literature in the ninth century. The patterns of the emergence, cultivation and uses of these vernacular texts shed light on programmes mobilized in Alsace and Lotharingia during Charlemagne's reign and during the division of the Carolingian Empire in the second third of the ninth century.

From these sources, one can make out a distinctive political order based on networks of monasteries and kin-groups which took shape in the seventh century and persisted until the early eleventh century. Throughout the early middle ages, families and monks existed in close, symbiotic relationships, linked together by bonds of friendship, kinship, aristocratic solidarity and shared property rights. The laity supported monasteries with gifts of property, and the monks reciprocated with counter grants and prayers that sanctified lay lordships. In this way, families cooperated with monks to tap the archival memory of

⁵³ See Davies and Fouracre, *Property and Power*, pp. 12–16; and Fouracre, 'Eternal Light and Earthly Needs', pp. 53–68; see also more generally, Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1999).

monasteries to claim property donated by ancestors, or to hand down property to their descendants and thus establish intergenerational continuity. In short, monasteries – and the precarial property entrusted to the oversight of monks – provided the material and institutional props that account for the impressive persistence of early medieval lordships.

While monasteries and families cooperated to cultivate a local order, their relationship underwent substantial readjustment in the eighth century, when the Carolingians extended their power. The Carolingian family, itself having constructed a base of local power around a series of monastic foundations and eager to consolidate its authority, was careful to integrate monasteries into its royal lordship with privileges, grants of immunity from lordly control and the confirmation of property rights. As the Carolingians extended liberties and protections to monasteries, they earned in return the gratitude of a talented and educated class of monks willing to copy and promulgate royal edicts, to create art, literature and other useful propaganda, and even to allow their royal protectors to grant out ecclesiastical properties to supporters. As they tied monasteries to themselves with royal favour, Carolingian kings co-opted not merely an ecclesiastical elite, but also the clusters of families tied to the monks by kinship, friendship and property. In this way, the protections extended to monastic communities reinforced the existing local order, simultaneously safeguarded the property rights of patrons and helped families to consolidate their lordships. By these means, Carolingian rulers were able to project their authority into localities with as little disruption of local sensibilities as possible.

The projection of royal power into local affairs transformed the relationship between monasteries and their patrons. With the support of powerful kings, abbots attempted to assert the superiority of their rights over those of the donating kin-groups. As part of an effort to subordinate lay to ecclesiastical rights, monasteries attempted to assess rents more regularly on precarial property granted out to lay patrons and thus transformed an essentially equal relationship into one which was relatively more hierarchical and fiscal. By the mid-ninth century, Carolingian dynasts were able to use these sophisticated instruments of lordship to consolidate and mobilize support as they advanced their territorial ambitions.

Although the Carolingian dynasty lost power in the early tenth century in east Francia, the basic political order remained intact. The Ottonian kings quickly revived a strong kingship and, in Alsace in particular, exerted a powerful influence over local affairs. Although the families that had been prominent before and during Carolingian rule continued to patronize many of the same monasteries and retain their local

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prominence, the local situation had been significantly reconfigured: dominant families constructed more tightly focused comital lordships around monasteries and personally lorded over these foundations as heritable family possessions well into the tenth century. This distinctive local order of monks and patrons was profoundly transformed in the late tenth century under the pressure of both monastic reform, which questioned the rights of lay aristocrats over monastic institutions, and an assertive Ottonian kingship, which sought to revise the aristocratic order in Alsace. The arrangements that subsequently emerged in the course of the eleventh century sharply distinguished secular from ecclesiastical rights: monasteries established the right to internal self-governance, the old families disappeared and new families reconstituted themselves as lords of castles.

THE LATE MEROVINGIAN ORDER

In 751, Pippin III deposed the last Merovingian king, Childeric III (743–51), assumed the kingship of the Franks and, three years later, along with his wife and two sons Charlemagne and Carloman, was anointed with holy oil when he received the sacrament of confirmation from Pope Stephen.¹ Few historians now believe that the accession of the Carolingian dynasty abruptly transformed the ideological basis of Frankish kingship, replacing a formerly pagan, Germanic sacrality with a Christian one.² Merovingian kings, as their Carolingian successors, considered themselves responsible for protecting and patronizing the church, and spreading the faith.³ It recently has been argued that Pippin likely never was constituted king by anointing, and that the confirming of Pippin's family developed into a king-making ceremony

¹ On Pippin's anointing, see Josef Semmler, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung* (Brühl, 2003); Fritz Kern, *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages*, trans. S. B. Chrimes (Oxford, 1939), pp. 34–50; Reinhard Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftsnachfolge bei den Langobarden und Merowingern*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 3 (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 187–203; Arnold Angenendt, 'Rex et Sacerdos: Zur Genese der Königssalbung', in Norbert Kamp and Joachim Wollasch eds., *Tradition als historische Kraft: Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters* (Berlin, New York, 1982), pp. 100–18; and Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara, and Soissons: The Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin, New York, 1985), pp. 107–65.

² Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, pp. 313–34; and Schneider, *Königswahl*, pp. 204–7. On the familial and factional politics bound up with Pippin's anointing, see Matthias Becher, 'Drogo und die Königserhebung Pippins', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 23 (1989), pp. 131–51; and Brigitte Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowing- und Karolingerzeit*, MGH Schriften 44 (Hanover, 1997), pp. 121–8.

³ J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 53–74, 94–122; Eugen Ewig, 'Zum christlichen Königsgedanken im Frühmittelalter', in Theodor Mayer ed., *Das Königtum: Seine geistigen rechtlichen Grundlagen, Vorträge und Forschungen* 3 (Constance, 1956), pp. 7–73, esp. pp. 17–41; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (London, 1962), pp. 222–31, 243–8; and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 47–71; Janet L. Nelson, 'Inauguration Rituals', in P. H. Sawyer and I. N. Wood eds., *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), pp. 50–71, esp. pp. 56–60.

only later.⁴ Whatever the precise circumstances surrounding Pippin's accession, the anointing of the royal family by means of a sacramental ritual imported from Rome and Pippin's special relationship to the vicar of St Peter were perceived to be propitious for the new dynasty,⁵ marking the culmination of a process that dated from the previous century when a new aristocratic consciousness emerged in the wake of Irish missions.⁶ As powerful Frankish families legitimized themselves through the foundation, patronage and staffing of monasteries, the kingship, perhaps inevitably, was adapted to the piety of the elite. In contrast to the Merovingians, the Carolingians infused the kingship with monastic spirituality and presided over an empire regulated by common assemblies of lay and ecclesiastical lords.⁷ In short, the liturgical rituals that enhanced the aura of the Carolingian rulers expressed the interests of a sanctified aristocracy the kingship claimed to represent.⁸

The sharpened Christian consciousness of the aristocracy and the kingship were symptoms of a fundamental reconfiguration of power by the eighth century. It is no accident that most of the great families and monasteries of the Carolingian Empire could trace their origins to the seventh century.⁹ When the city-based administration that sustained the late antique provincial aristocracy began to disappear, a new order unfolded as rural elites, both lay and ecclesiastical, tethered their property and prestige to monastic foundations. To elucidate the salient features of this local order and its eventual assimilation into the Carolingian political system, we shall compare the Pippinids, the seventh-century ancestors of

⁴ Semmler, *Dynastiewechsel*, pp. 46–53.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–7; Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 133–55, esp. pp. 149–50.

⁶ Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert)*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1988), pp. 121–51, 485–93; Karl Bosl, 'Der "Adelsheilige": Idealtypus und Wirklichkeit, Gesellschaft und Kultur im merowingergezeitlichen Bayern des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts: Gesellschaftliche Beiträge zu den Viten der bayerischen Stammesheiligen Emmeram, Rupert, Corbinian', in *Speculum Historiale: Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. Clemens Bauer, Laetitia Boehm and Max Müller (Freiburg, Munich, 1965), pp. 167–87; and Geary, *Before France and Germany*, pp. 167–78.

⁷ On the heightened Christian consciousness of the Carolingian kingship, see Ewig, 'Zum christlichen Königsgedanken im Frühmittelalter', in Mayer ed., *Das Königtum*, pp. 41–73; and Heinrich Büttner, 'Aus den Anfängen des abendländischen Staatsgedankens: Die Königserhebung Pippins', *ibid.*, pp. 155–67.

⁸ Cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 98–109. On the liturgical elements characteristic of Carolingian victory rituals, see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 328–87.

⁹ Régine Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VII^e–X^e siècle): Essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris, 1995), pp. 20–1, 387–434; see also Guy Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 45–53, 262–75; Geary, *Before France and Germany*, pp. 167–78.

the anointed Carolingians, with the precocious families of the Vosges. This will bring into relief the similar methods by which the Pippinids and other families established and perpetuated their dominance, as well as the possibilities in local lordship that enabled the ambitious Pippinids to extend their authority beyond their regional base of power.

THE PIPPINIDS

Far from experiencing an inexorable rise to power, the Pippinids (also known as the Arnulfings) had their original base of power in the mid-Meuse region.¹⁰ Recent studies have emphasized that they were one of several families, any one of which could have emerged dominant.¹¹ The current emphasis on contingency and crisis in the Pippinids' rise to power, however, obscures the methods of acquiring and perpetuating power that were developed in the seventh century and which virtually guaranteed that the Pippinids would have remained at the least important players in Frankish affairs. While prestigious offices and vast estates certainly contributed to the Pippinids' successes, neither *honores* nor property, alone or in combination, can adequately explain the family's remarkable continuity. Both were available to families in the sixth century, yet we would be hard pressed – with the obvious exception of the Merovingian family – to trace any of these families into the early medieval period or, conversely, any early medieval families back into the sixth century. Pivotal was the patronage of family monasteries in the seventh

¹⁰ Eduard Hlawitschka, 'Zur landschaftlichen Herkunft der Karolinger', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 27 (1962), pp. 1–17; Eduard Hlawitschka, 'Die Vorfahren Karls des Großen', in Wolfgang Braunfels ed., *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, 5 vols. (Düsseldorf, 1965–1968), vol. I: *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Beumann (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp. 51–82; Matthias Werner, *Der Lütticher Raum in frühkarolingischer Zeit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer karolingischen Stammlandschaft*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 62 (Göttingen, 1980); Matthias Werner, *Adelsfamilien im Umkreis der frühen Karolinger*, Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband 28 (Sigmaringen, 1982); Eugen Ewig, *Trier im Merowingerreich: Civitas, Stadt, Bistum* (Trier, 1954), pp. 113–16, 122; Herwig Wolfram, 'Der heilige Rupert und die antkarolingische Adelsopposition', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 80 (1972), pp. 4–34; Horst Ebling, 'Die inneraustrasische Opposition', in Jörg Jarnut, Ulrich Nonn and Michael Richter eds., *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der *Francia* 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 295–304.

¹¹ Richard Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987); Paul Fouracre, 'Observations on the Outgrowth of Pippinid Influence in the "Regnum Francorum" after the Battle of Tertry (687–715)', *Medieval Prosopography* 5 (1984), pp. 1–31; Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (London, 2000), pp. 33–78, 155–74; Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 330–49; Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 23–37; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 255–72; and Irene Haselbach, 'Aufstieg und Herrschaft der Karolinger in der Darstellung der sogenannten *Annalen Mettenses priores*', *Historische Studien* 412 (1970), pp. 1–208.

century which enabled kin-groups to institutionalize their consciousness and wealth.

The process with respect to the Pippinids is vividly depicted in the *Life of Saint Gertrude* and two other hagiographical works associated with Pippin the Elder's daughter Gertrude, the *Miracles of Saint Gertrude* and the *Nivelles Addition to the Life of Fursey*.¹² Long recognized as invaluable sources for the narrative history of the mid-seventh century and for genealogical reconstructions of the early Pippinids, these accounts primarily were written to memorialize the dramas surrounding the foundation and early history of Nivelles and Fosse, two celebrated centres of monastic spirituality built with Pippinid patronage. While the rapid success of these foundations no doubt reflected glory on the family, they did much more than manufacture prestige. They allowed the Pippinids a surer means to control their resources, and thus their destiny, especially during vulnerable moments in the family's life cycle.

Marriage alliances and the hoarding of conjugal assets have always offered powerful families a means to advance or protect their positions. Revealing in the seventh century is the way that foundations, and the ideology of chastity and virginity, could work to restrict lines of affiliation. According to the *Life of Gertrude*, the founding of Nivelles was the byproduct of soured marriage politics within the kingdom of Austrasia. The hagiographer began the *Life* with Dagobert's effort to arrange a union between Gertrude and the son of a powerful Austrasian duke, and the young girl's feisty rejection of marriage and bold declaration to become a nun.¹³ Whatever the truth of this story, within the confines of the text the vignette served to establish Gertrude's precocious saintliness and to foreshadow the power struggle that ensued upon Pippin's death, when Gertrude's mother Itta founded a monastery at Nivelles and fended off a clique of unnamed enemies who wanted to force Gertrude into another marriage.¹⁴

The hagiographer naturally presents Gertrude's and Itta's heroism as the inexorable triumph of the will of God, as the victories of two godly women armed with little more than moral authority against the determined opposition of the devil and his allies. But these episodes can also be read for other embedded lessons. One notices, for example, that the two episodes of attempted marriage, which occurred on either side of Pippin's

¹² *Vita Sanctae Geretrudis and De Virtutibus, Quae Facta Sunt post Discessum Beate Geretrudis Abbatissae*, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 447–74; *Additamentum Nivialense de Fuilano*, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH SRM* 4 (Hanover, 1902), pp. 449–51; cf. Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 301–19.

¹³ *Vita Geretrudis*, c. 1, pp. 454–5. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 2, pp. 455–6.

death (640) – or perhaps, more accurately, because they took place before and after Pippin's death – transpired differently. In the first episode, Gertrude allegedly defied the king in the presence of her powerful father. If we play down the hagiographer's emphasis on religious heroism here and work from the assumption that it would have taken more than a girl's steely determination to deter the likes of a king and an ambitious courtier, we might conclude that the story either had been invented or at least greatly simplified.¹⁵ Whether interpolated or simply reinterpreted, the event had to be presented in a way that the author's audience would have found credible. Consequently, Gertrude's act of defiance was situated within the context of a lordly meal and in the presence of her father who, according to the account, had not been apprized of the bargain. The audience, presumably, would have found Gertrude's victory much more believable against the implied resistance of her parents to Dagobert's plans.

The second episode occurred after the family had been deprived of its patriarch, whose passing left two well-born women, Pippin's wife Itta and her daughter Gertrude, attractive prospects for marriage on account of their status and propertied wealth. Frankish legal custom suggests that Gertrude had inherited a share of the paternal estates upon her father's death, and that Itta was equipped with her dowry wealth and enjoyed usufruct over a third share of the properties accumulated during her marriage to Pippin.¹⁶ Although personal inheritance and dowries theoretically were under the exclusive control of the women who received them, in practice dowries and the widow's share were subject to the interests of the kin-group, which 'might urge its conversion into religious capital'.¹⁷ The hagiographer indirectly drew attention to the process when he claimed that Itta, upon finding herself a widow and responsible for the 'orphan' Gertrude, was receptive to the idea of establishing a monastery. On the advice of Amandus, a bishop with connections to Irish monks, she decided to erect a monastery for herself and her daughter. The author claims that enemies then emerged to thwart Itta's plans and steal Gertrude away, but the account concedes that the tensions arose not so much from the plans for a new foundation, but rather from Itta's

¹⁵ On the probable historical basis of the story, see Gerberding and Fouracre, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 312–13.

¹⁶ Cf. Régine Le Jan-Hennebicque, 'Aux origines du douaire médiéval (VI^e–X^e siècles)', in Michel Parisse ed., *Veuves et veuvage dans le haut moyen âge* (Paris, 1993), pp. 107–22; and Nelson, 'Wary Widow', pp. 85–94.

¹⁷ Nelson, 'Wary Widow', p. 89; cf. François-Louis Ganshof, 'Le statut de la femme dans la monarchie franque', *Recueil de la Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions* 12 (1962), pp. 5–58, esp. pp. 15–17, 25–40.

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resistance to the attempts of her enemies to arrange a marriage for Gertrude. That is, the foundation probably became a target of hostility only after Itta responded to the suitors by convincing her daughter to take up monastic vows.

While Itta no doubt was sincere in her religious convictions, we also know from other sources that the foundation took place against the backdrop of competition for the mayorship in Austrasia between the Pippinids and a faction led by a powerful aristocrat named Otto.¹⁸ After Pippin's death, Otto managed to win the mayoralty, only to lose it in 643 when he was murdered at the instigation of Gertrude's brother Grimoald.¹⁹ It is likely that the story of Gertrude's being promised to the son of a powerful Austrasian duke and the subsequent attempts to force her into marriage refer to the political jostling between at least two great Austrasian factions; and that the foundation not only of Nivelles, but also of Fosse, was devised partly in response to these pressures and to the family's attempt to consolidate its position after Grimoald gained the mayorship. According to the *Nivelles Addition*, shortly after Nivelles was founded Itta and her daughter Gertrude offered sanctuary to the Irish monk Foillan, who had been expelled by the Neustrian mayor Erchinoald. With the protection and resources of Itta's son Grimoald, Foillan then organized a second monastery at nearby Fosse (c. 650).²⁰

Whatever the precise relationship between the foundations and political events, we can observe that Itta made two critical decisions that concentrated Pippinid wealth and protected it from grasping rivals. She prevented family property from being dispersed by marriage when she took the veil herself and persuaded her daughter to do the same and, again, when she entrusted a complex of family estates to the new foundation. While this endowment technically passed under the authority of the chapter of monks and nuns, the family effectively controlled it through the office of abbess, occupied first by Itta and then, at Itta's insistence, by her daughter Gertrude.²¹ In this way the virginity and chastity of the Pippinid women played a crucial role not merely in the sanctification of the family, but also in the family's ability to control and protect its wealth. Moreover, as Nivelles grew with the addition of members and the donations of property from surrounding families, the monastery developed a network that connected the founding family to the local

¹⁸ Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 16–18, 309–10, 312–15, and p. 321, n. 97.

¹⁹ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, pp. 9–10.

²⁰ *Additamentum Nivialese*, pp. 449–50. On Fosse and Nivelles, see Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 185–7; and Gerberding and Fouracre, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 314–17.

²¹ *Vita Geretrudis*, c. 3, pp. 457–8.

aristocracy and in essence helped to institutionalize the Pippinids' dominant position.

As a result, Nivelles helped to sustain the family during its greatest trial when Gertrude's brother Grimoald lost his life in an attempt to have his son raised to the kingship. In the years following the murder of his rival Otto, Grimoald proved to be an energetic founder of monasteries in the family's base of power in the Ardennes, generally in ways that dovetailed with his political ambitions. In addition to Fosse, Grimoald and a holy man named Remaclus participated in a royal foundation at Cugnon and cooperated with the king in founding a major monastery at Stavelot and Malmedy.²² Well entrenched in northern Austrasia and wielding the mayorship, Grimoald made a daring bid for power. After the death of Sigibert III (632–56), Grimoald arranged to have Sigibert's son Dagobert exiled to Ireland and his own son elevated to the kingship with the Merovingian name Childebert.²³ Outraged, a Neustrian faction apprehended Grimoald in 657 and had him tortured to death, although Childebert himself survived and ruled until 662.

The 'Grimoald coup' has been played up recently in English-language scholarship as a grave crisis for the Pippinids, a miscalculation which nearly ruined the family and an embarrassment which later generations were eager to suppress.²⁴ The *Life of Gertrude* does allude to fall-out from the episode, pointedly referring to the 'hatred' of kings and queens that dogged the family. The Pippinids did not reassert themselves as major players in Austrasian affairs for almost two decades, until the emergence of Pippin of Herstal (676; 679/80), an indication that the episode had imperilled the family's prospects. Although the *Life of Gertrude* is a valuable source for illuminating the obscured politics of the period, it also permits us to gaze upon the deeper structures of lordship that virtually guaranteed a Pippinid resurgence.

If the men of the family momentarily had disappeared from the stage of history, the women were busy defending an important power base at Nivelles when the resentful 'kings, queens and priests', presumably exploiting the family's compromised position after both Grimoald's downfall (657) and Gertrude's death (659), attempted to expropriate the monastery. Several months before her death, Gertrude had ensured that

²² Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 169; Werner, *Lüttlicher Raum*, pp. 355–68.

²³ *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 215–328; c. 43, pp. 315–16; cf. Jean-Michel Picard, 'Church and Politics in the Seventh-Century: The Irish Exile of King Dagobert II', in J. M. Picard ed., *Ireland and Northern France, AD 600–850* (Dublin, 1991), pp. 27–52.

²⁴ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, pp. 47–66; Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, pp. 37–8, 158; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 222–4, 233.

Nivelles would pass to the control of a third generation of Pippinid women when she designated her niece, Grimoald's daughter Wulfetrude, as her successor.²⁵ It was only then that, 'out of hatred for her father', Wulfetrude's enemies tried to dislodge her from the monastery and 'possess the property of God'. According to the hagiographer, Wulfetrude was protected by the Lord and the prayers of 'holy men', presumably members of her religious community, and repulsed her 'wicked', 'diabolical' and 'rapacious' adversaries. In other words, the monastery's endowment, the core of which comprised Pippinid property, was not easy to confiscate because it technically belonged to God; and anyone accused of oppressing a 'house of God' ran the risk of being stigmatized as an agent of evil. If alleged oppressors could not be shamed with vituperation, the abbess could harness the monastery's hard power and mobilize Nivelles' network of patron families. Or she could use the monastery's material resources to win over enemies with gifts: with 'liberality and benefices' (*largitas et beneficia*) – presumably grants of property – the abbess reportedly turned her former persecutors into defenders.²⁶

Upon Wulfetrude's death in 663 the abbacy passed to a certain Agnes, who, although not a Pippinid herself, sprang from a noble family once close to Gertrude.²⁷ Agnes's accession points to another advantage of family foundations: charged with the responsibility to nurture the memory of their benefactors, and populated by monks and nuns from allied groups, these supple institutions did not have to be administered exclusively by blood relatives in order to be effective agents for the dominant kin-group. As Gertrude's spiritual kinswoman, Agnes worked on behalf of the Pippinids, later helping Gertrude's sister Begga, the mother of Pippin of Herstal, to establish another foundation at Andennes (c. 692).²⁸ As abbess, Agnes also must have presided over the composition of the *Life of Gertrude*, which is believed to have been written shortly after Wulfetrude's death, probably around 670. The triumphant tone of the *Life*, which opens with a harangue about the wide renown of the Pippinids, presumes that the family's fortunes had by then been revived. When Pippin of Herstal emerged later in the decade, he did so from a position of strength successfully defended by his kinswomen.

Having learned well from the traumas of the 650s and 660s, the Pippinids applied the lessons of Nivelles more systematically. Following his victory over the Neustrians at Tertry (687), Pippin of Herstal pursued an aggressive 'monastic policy' to tighten his hold on the mid-Meuse

²⁵ *Vita Geretrudis*, c. 6, pp. 459–60. ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 460. ²⁷ *De Virtutibus*, c. 6, p. 467.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 10, p. 469; cf. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 190.

region and to extend his influence southward to Metz and westward into Neustria.²⁹ Pippin and other men closely allied to the family endowed several new monasteries. So too did the women. Pippin's mother Begga, his wife Plectrude and his mother-in-law Irmina spearheaded or contributed to three more foundations. Under Pippin, the family also moved from founding monasteries to co-opting already existing institutions. In some cases, as at Stavelot-Malmedy and Metz, Pippin simply reactivated connections established long before by his ancestors Grimoald and Arnulf, respectively.³⁰ In many other cases, Pippin capitalized on his family's reputation as pious patrons and brought monasteries originally outside the family's network under his protection. The abbots of these monasteries, often installed with Pippin's favour, became prominent agents of Pippinid expansion to the west into Neustria. As we shall see, this early pattern of projecting Pippinid power anticipated the methods the Carolingians would use to extend their authority in the Vosges.

FAMILIES IN THE VOSGES REGION

The Pippinids were able to extend their influence so effectively not because they were innovators as such, but because their methods for consolidating a regional base of support in northwestern Austrasia were compatible with parallel developments elsewhere. Had they not been part and parcel of a larger process, it is difficult to envisage how any family aspiring to royal power could have been successful. As it happened, when the Carolingians expanded in the eighth century, a receptive ground of similar associative networks already had been prepared in many regions. Perhaps nowhere is this process more visible than in the Vosges, where the Gundoin, Wolfoald-Gundoin and Etichonid families worked closely with Irish monks and their disciples to organize family monasteries that, in the hands of the Etichonids, would form the foundations of the most enduring lordship of the early middle ages. Ultimately, this network of monasteries and families, in some respects more precocious and more highly developed than anywhere else, was ideally receptive to Carolingian authority.

²⁹ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, pp. 96–105; Josef Semmler, 'Episcopi potestas und karolingische Klosterpolitik', in Arno Borst ed., *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel zur Gründungszeit des Klosters Reichenau*, Vorträge und Forschungen 20 (Sigmaringen, 1974), pp. 305–95; and Alain Dierkens, *Abbayes et chapitres entre Sambre et Meuse (VII^e–XI^e siècles): Contribution à l'histoire religieuse des campagnes du Haut Moyen Age*, Beihefte der Francia 14 (Sigmaringen, 1985), pp. 318–27; and Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 185–206.

³⁰ On Metz, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 192–3.

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The Gundoins and Wolfoald-Gundoins

Like the Pippinids, the Gundoins stepped into the light of history only in the early seventh century, having emerged from the upper-Moselle region in the person of a certain Gundoin, putatively the first duke in Alsace.³¹ The duke had five children, the most noteworthy of whom were his daughter Sadalberga, who established a monastery in Laon, and his son Leudinus-Bodo, who became bishop of Toul and founded Bonmoutier, a monastery in the Albegau east of Toul (see table 1). We know little of Gundoin's rise to prominence, only that by the second quarter of the seventh century he appears in the sources as a *vir inluster*, i.e. a royal courtier, and as a duke who operated in an area that encompassed both sides of the Vosges, the Burgundian Gate and the northern Transjura. His dukedom probably had been created by Dagobert to stabilize the southern reaches of Austrasia, an important and contested centre of Merovingian power.³² In Alsace, Merovingian kings possessed a fortress at Seltz and a palace at Marlenheim west of Strasburg, and made frequent use of both in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.³³

Royal interest in the area can partly be explained by the strategic location of Alsace vis à vis a restive Alemannia and the rebellious Transjura, which Dagobert's father Chlotar II (584–629) had suppressed and reorganized after 613.³⁴ But this is only a part of the story. More problematic was the region's position with respect to the Frankish kingdoms of Burgundy and Austrasia. Toward the end of the sixth century, Alsace and the territories of the upper-Moselle valley were felt to belong to Austrasia; and the territories to the southwest of the Vosges in the Doubs-Saône basin to Burgundy. These jurisdictions were revised twice in violation of Austrasian sensibilities: Childebert II (575–96) granted Alsace to his son, the Burgundian king Theuderic II (596–613), presumably because Theuderic, who had been raised in Alsace, commanded the support of the local aristocracy. The arrangement proved unstable, and

³¹ On the family of Gundoin, see Horst Ebling, *Prosopographie der Amtsträger des Merowingerreiches von Chlotar II. (613) bis Karl Martell (741)*, Beihefte der *Francia* 2 (Munich, 1974), pp. 166–7; Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 61–2, 70–1; Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 7–8; Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 21–5; Hagen Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft und alemannisches Herzogtum im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 124 (1976), pp. 1–30, esp. pp. 27–30.

³² Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 5–8; Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft', pp. 12–30; Geuenich et al., 'Elsaß', p. 186.

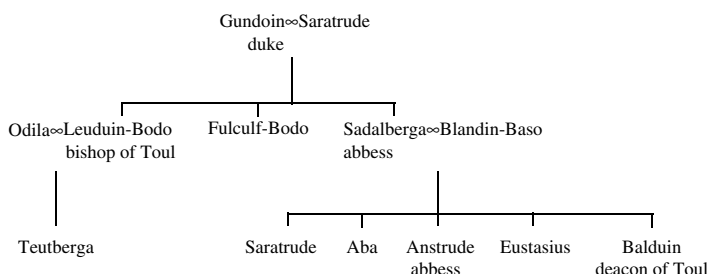
³³ Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum*, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *MGH SRM* 1 (Hanover, 1951), bk 9, c. 38, p. 393; bk 10, c. 18, pp. 430–1; Fredegar, *Chronicarum Libri IV*, bk 4, cc. 37, 43, pp. 138, 142.

³⁴ *Ibid.*; cf. Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft', pp. 12–14.

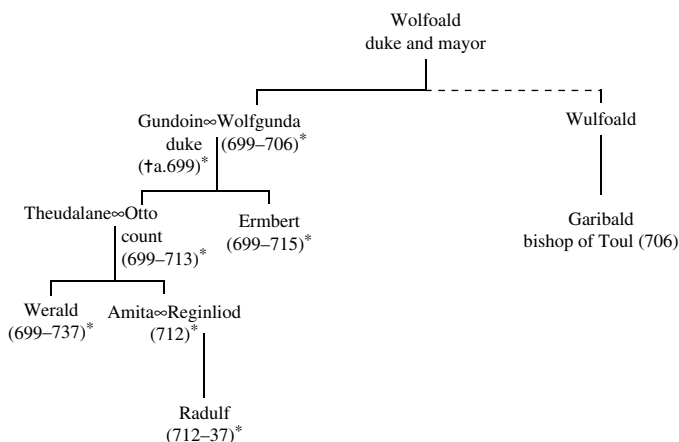
Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe

Table 1. *The Gundoins and Wolfoald-Gundoins*

a. The family of Gundoin, duke in Alsace



b. The Wolfoald-Gundoins



*Dates when individuals appear in the cartulary of Weissenburg

Theuderic's brother, the Austrasian king Theudebert II, invested the area with an Austrasian force. In 610, he compelled Theuderic to cede Alsace and the territories west of the Vosges, but lost them two years later when Theuderic forcibly drove him from Alsace.³⁵ In 623, Chlotar installed his son Dagobert as king over Austrasia but excluded from his son's kingdom the territories west of both the Ardennes and the Vosges.³⁶ A dispute soon ensued, but it was resolved peacefully when Chlotar ceded most of the contested territories to Austrasia.³⁷ We might infer from all this that

³⁵ Fredegar, *Chronicarum Libri IV*, bk 4, cc. 37-38, pp. 138-9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, bk 4, c. 47, p. 144.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, bk 4, c. 53, pp. 146-7.

Gundoin's dukedom, which was organized in the aftermath of these unsuccessful revisions of Austrasian boundaries, was devised not in reaction to a threatening Alemannia, but in response to inter-Frankish quarrels over the boundaries of Austrasia. This would neatly account for the choice of Gundoin, who stemmed from the Meuse-Moselle basin, the scope of his activities as duke, which encompassed the disputed territories in southern Austrasia, and Dagobert's successful efforts to marry Gundoin's daughter, Sadalberga, to a courtier sometime between 629 and 631, i.e. shortly after Chlotar's death.³⁸

The family of Duke Gundoin probably was related to another south-Austrasian group, the so-called Wolfoald-Gundoins (see table 1).³⁹ The Wolfoald-Gundoins issued from another, later Austrasian duke named Gundoin (669–before 699) and his father-in-law Wolfoald, duke and mayor in Austrasia (662–79). The group's ancestral estates, as they are reflected in the few surviving charters, were scattered throughout the upper-Meuse-Moselle basin, between Verdun and the Vosges in the Saargau, the Albegau, the Saulnois and the Chaumont.⁴⁰ Both groups might have been related to two other late seventh-century dukes, Bonifacius, the second duke in Alsace, and Theotchar, duke in the upper Moselle basin in the late seventh century (682).⁴¹ These dukes and their families probably formed a nexus of affiliated kin-groups in northeastern Burgundy and southern Austrasia.⁴²

The Wolfoald-Gundoins, who periodically vied for the mayoralship, are believed to have headed a 'south Austrasian opposition' to the Pippinids.⁴³ The person who benefited from Grimoald's fall was Wolfoald, who then became mayor in Austrasia and held the title until he was succeeded by Pippin of Herstal. Prosopographical reconstructions indicate that Wolfoald's son-in-law, Duke Gundoin, was a descendant of the earlier Mayor Otto who had been murdered by

³⁸ On the date of Sadalberga's marriage, see Hans Hummer, 'Die merowingische Herkunft der Vita Sadalbergae', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 59, 2 (2003), pp. 459–93, esp. p. 484, n. 98.

³⁹ On the Wolfoald-Gundoins, see Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 28–32; Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 166–9, 241–6; Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 388–92; and Werner, *Lüttlicher Raum*, pp. 100–11.

⁴⁰ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 223, 205, 252, 226, 239, 218, 240.

⁴¹ On Bonifacius, see Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 25–6; and on Theotchar, see Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 126–48. The names of Duke Bonifacius's sons, Gundebold and Teodald, hint at connections to the Wolfoald-Gundoins and to Duke Theotchar, cf. *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 203. Langenbeck also noted the appearance of various *Bonifacii* as witnesses to Wolfoald-Gundoin charters, 'Probleme', p. 36.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 28–32; Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 166–9, 243–6; Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 388–95, 439.

⁴³ Ebling, 'Die inneraustrasische Opposition', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 299–302; and Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 28–42. On the connections of Sadalberga's father, Gundoin, to the opposition group, see Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft', p. 29.

Grimoald in 643;⁴⁴ and that this Duke Gundoin probably is the same Gundoin who, according to later testimony, murdered Pippin of Herstal's father Ansegisel.⁴⁵ While it is reasonable to assume that the two powerful families would have contended frequently for *honores*, we should nonetheless avoid the temptation to reify such competition into rigid opposition groups. If we subscribe to blood feuds, we can imagine a century of implacable conflict between the Pippinids and the Wulfoald-Gundoins.

The evidence can also be read to support a more complicated story of both alliance and hostility. Many opportunities for cooperation between the Pippinids and the alleged opposition families arose in the 670s and 680s when Wulfoald and Pippin of Herstal both contested the power of the Neustrian mayor Ebroin. The earlier Duke Gundoin's granddaughter Anstrude, abbess of St Mary's at Laon, is reported to have been related to a certain Wulfoald, whom she once dispatched to Pippin for help during a dispute with the bishop of Laon⁴⁶ and who probably was the same count in the *pagus* of Verdun.⁴⁷ At about the same time, an Austrasian count named Gundoin appeared among a circle of counts who gathered to witness a property exchange between Pippin and Plectrude, and the bishop of Verdun.⁴⁸ The relationship of this Gundoin to the Wulfoald-Gundoins cannot be proved conclusively, but his association with a transaction of Verdun, where the Wulfoald-Gundoins had been influential, is suggestive. So too is the fact that Pippin was related by marriage to Duke Theotchar through his wife Plectrude, Theotchar's granddaughter.⁴⁹ We might also surmise that there were plenty of occasions for conflict between families within the posited south-Austrasian opposition group, especially in the late seventh century, when the boundary disputes that bedevilled relations between Austrasia and Burgundy arose again.

Of long-range significance for the political order of early medieval Europe was not so much the tit-for-tat manoeuvring of families, but the emerging patterns of lordship that in the end facilitated the extension of Carolingian power. Similar to the Pippinids, the Gundoins cultivated Irish monks and patronized a number of monasteries which helped them to consolidate their power. Indeed, the Gundoins were more precocious

⁴⁴ Eugen Ewig, 'Die fränkischen Teilreiche im 7. Jahrhundert (613–714)', in Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien* vol. I, pp. 199–200, esp. n. 116; Ewig, *Trier*, p. 137, n. 152; Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 64–5, 66–7, 167–9.

⁴⁵ Werner, *Lütticher Raum*, pp. 107–11.

⁴⁶ *Vita Anstrudis Abbatissae Laudunensis*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, *MGH SRM* 6 (Hanover, Leipzig, 1913), pp. 64–78: c. 16, p. 73.

⁴⁷ Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 243–6. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 169–70.

⁴⁹ Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 126–34.

than the Pippinids, having associated themselves early on with the great Irish foundation at Luxeuil. Established around 590 by the celebrated Irish monk Columbanus (†615) on the southwestern slope of the Vosges, Luxeuil prospered under Columbanus's two successors, Eustasius (c. 610–29) and Waldebert (629–70), who cooperated with the surrounding families to endow new foundations.⁵⁰ The close connection between the activities of the abbots of Luxeuil and the elaboration of the Gundoin's lordship is vividly depicted in several hagiographical texts.

According to the *Life of Columbanus*, composed around 640 by Jonas of Bobbio, Eustasius of Luxeuil literally sanctified Duke Gundoin's family.⁵¹ On returning from his missions beyond the Rhine, Eustasius reportedly called upon Gundoin, who resided 'in the villa called Meuse', near the headwaters of the Meuse river. Eustasius blessed the home and then requested to see Gundoin's children. Gundoin presented 'two boys of good character'. In a scene which echoes Samuel's request to see Jesse's youngest child David, Eustasius then asked, 'Do you have yet another child?' Gundoin admitted that he had a daughter named Sadalberga, but that she was blind. 'Let her come,' Eustasius ordered; and when the holy man saw her he was stirred to enquire 'whether her youthful soul aspired to the service of divine fear?' She answered that she had prepared herself for the holy call as much as her tender age allowed. Eustasius fasted for two days, fortified himself with faith and then 'poured the oil of benediction over the [girl's] eyes'. Through Eustasius, God restored sight to her eyes, 'so that this girl who had received light might aspire more abundantly after divine gifts'. Sadalberga, Jonas concluded, 'is still living and, having surrendered to divine service, provides opportunities not only for her own benefit, but also for others'. In other words, at the time of Jonas's writing in 640, Sadalberga was living as a nun and had established herself as a monastic patroness.

As a monk of Bobbio, Jonas perhaps was uninterested in the detailed history of the regions through which his Columbanan heroes passed. Fortunately, two accounts that sprouted up in the wake of the Gundoin's activities, the *Life of Sadalberga* and the *Life of Germanus*,⁵² permit us to situate Sadalberga's career as a nun within the framework of her family's activities as lordly patrons north of the Alps. The *Life of Germanus* commemorates the career of Germanus, monk of Luxeuil and abbot of the monastery at

⁵⁰ Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 121–51; see also Ian Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 1 (1982), pp. 63–80.

⁵¹ Jonas, *Vitae Columbani*, bk 2, c. 8, pp. 243–5.

⁵² *Vita Sadalbergae Abbatissae Laudunensis*, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, Leipzig, 1910), pp. 40–66; Bobolenus, *Vita Germani Abbatis Grandivallensis*, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, Leipzig, 1910), pp. 25–40.

Grandval in the Transjura. Written no later than 685 by the monk Bobolenus, the *Life* recounts the foundation of Grandval by Waldebert and Gundoin, and the suppression of the monastery at the hands of the Etichonid duke Adalrich.⁵³ We shall return to Adalrich's seizure of the monastery; for the moment we shall limit ourselves to what the text reveals about the intimate relationship between lordship and monastic foundation.

According to Bobolenus, it came to the attention of the 'illustrious man' Gundoin that Abbot Waldebert, Eustasius's successor at Luxeuil, wanted to establish another monastery.⁵⁴ Luxeuil had become too crowded and the abbot was looking for an attractive location that could sustain a colony of monks. Gundoin sent his messengers to Waldebert and requested a meeting. Waldebert hurried to Gundoin and, after they discussed the proposal, Gundoin granted Waldebert favourable, but remote, places for a new foundation. 'Then Waldebert began to sooth [Gundoin's] soul with gentle words, so that, if willing, he might show the firmness of those places, strengthened with his own hands and with those of good men for the remedy of his soul and the absolution of his sins.' In other words, Waldebert asked Gundoin to make a formal gift of property to establish a new monastery.⁵⁵

Gundoin's eagerness to recruit monks from Luxeuil was not misplaced. The energetic Waldebert struck out for the chosen site and found a promising location among a hollow of stones, a valley he dubbed 'Grandval', in the midst of which ran a stream abundant with fish. He exhorted his monks to live there and summoned one of his presbyters, Fridoald, who had been one of Columbanus's monks. Fridoald brought a number of brothers along and 'exerting himself with them in labour, began to cut wood, so that they might support [themselves]'.⁵⁶ Waldebert

⁵³ On the foundation of Grandval, see Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 61–5; Heinrich Büttner, 'Studien zur Geschichte von Moutier-Grandval und St Ursanne', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 58 (1964), pp. 9–34, esp. pp. 10–13; and Hagen Keller, 'Mönchtum und Adel in den *Vitae patrum Jurensium* und in der *Vita Germani abbatis Grandivallensis*: Beobachtungen zum frühmittelalterlichen Kulturwandel im alemannisch-burgundischen Grenzraum', in Kaspar Elm, Eberhard Gönner and Eugen Hillenbrand eds., *Landesgeschichte und Geistesgeschichte: Festschrift für Otto Herding zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1977), pp. 1–23, esp. pp. 8–16.

⁵⁴ Bobolenus, *Vita Germani*, c. 7, p. 36.

⁵⁵ Compare Waldebert's request in the *Life of Germanus* with two Salic donation formulas: According to the *Vita Germani*, c. 7, p. 36: 'Tunc coepit Waldebertus verbis lenibus mulcere animum eius, ut, si vellet, pro Dei intuitu vel pro remedio animae sue vel absolutione peccaminum suorum firmitatem de ipsis locis manibus suis seu bonorum hominum roboratam manibus exhibeat.' The language of Gundoin's gift finds echoes in the *Formulae Salicae Bignonianae*, no. 10: '... ut per hanc epistolam donacione vel deliberatione nostra, manu mea vel bonorum firmata. . .'; and the *Formulae Salicae Lindenbergianae*, no. 6: '... sed magis praesens haec cartola tam a me quam ab aliis bonorum hominum manibus roborata, omni tempore firma et stabilis permaneat. . .'

⁵⁶ Bobolenus, *Vita Germani*, c. 8, p. 36.

then looked for someone worthy to govern the monks in accordance with the rule. From Luxeuil, he summoned another of his presbyters, Germanus, a person of 'noble stock, erudite in the sacred epistles and letters, and conspicuous in sanctity'.⁵⁷ Germanus immediately set about making the valley more accessible. He 'began to shatter the hardness of the rocks with his hands, and entrances were thrown open on either side of the valley and made accessible with roads'. In return for a donation of inaccessible property, this industrious group of monks had developed for their patron, Gundoin, a strategic valley through which ran, it turns out, an old Roman road. In short, they had cleared and repaired the shortest route from Basle to Biel.⁵⁸

The Gundoins did not always call upon holy men when they wanted to establish a monastery. Similar to the Pippinids, though again slightly earlier than the Pippinids, the women of Gundoin's family asserted themselves as foundresses and abbesses. The *Life of Sadalberga*, once dismissed as a Carolingian-era forgery of little historical worth, but actually written around 680, illuminates the career of Gundoin's daughter Sadalberga and her foundation of two monasteries, first in the borderlands between Austrasia and Burgundy, and then in Laon.⁵⁹ The account probably was composed as part of an effort to rehabilitate monastic life at Laon immediately after the civil wars between Dagobert II and Theuderic III (676–9), during which, the early eighth-century *Life of Anstrude* reveals, the Neustrian mayor Ebroin tried to drive Anstrude, Sadalberga's daughter and successor, from Laon, and had her brother Balduin murdered.⁶⁰ The turbulence took a toll on the family's position and, one can infer from the praising tone of the *Life of Sadalberga*, which was commissioned by Anstrude herself, left them scrambling to rehabilitate their reputation and fortunes. That said, the *Life* stands for more than one family's propaganda; it also reveals more broadly the processes of lordship that became decisive in the seventh century. In the course of the hagiographer's efforts to commemorate the achievements of the abbess's mother, Sadalberga, and Sadalberga's parents and siblings, he introduces us to a family which had attempted to perpetuate its fortunes not only by the traditional method of marriage, but also through the self-sanctifying activities of its holy women.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 9, p. 36. ⁵⁸ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 61–2.

⁵⁹ On the Merovingian provenance of the *Vita Sadalbergae*, see Hummer, 'Herkunft', pp. 459–93.

⁶⁰ *Vita Anstrudis*, cc. 5, 9–13, pp. 68–9, 70–2; cf. Hummer, 'Herkunft', pp. 492–3. Levison argued that the *Life* was based on an early eighth century account reworked in the Carolingian period, *Vita Anstrudis*, p. 64 and n. 5; cf. Hummer, 'Herkunft', p. 484 and n. 101.

The author of the *Life* situated Sadalberga's career within a tradition of Columbanan monasticism. Borrowing from Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*, he recounted Eustasius's missions to the east and touched upon the career of Columbanus.⁶¹ He then retold Eustasius's cure of Sadalberga.⁶² His account of the miracle largely follows Jonas; however, the author made subtle changes that brought the family into focus and drew attention to its pious (and worldly) triumphs. Gundoin no longer was simply 'a certain man' but became 'a certain illustrious man, opulent in wealth and fame according to the highest secular dignity and skilled in courtly affairs'. Eustasius did not bless the premises but immediately asked if the illustrious Frank had any children. The author then introduced his audience to the members of the family who had remained nameless in Jonas's account. Gundoin and his wife Saratrude, 'the likeness of elegance and a noble woman', presented their two sons Leudinus-Bodo, the elder, and Fulculfus, also called Bodo, the younger, to receive the 'grace of benediction'. Eustasius inquired whether there was yet another child, and they confessed to having a girl who had been 'deprived of light for some time'. Eustasius, suspecting that Sadalberga had already been chosen by God, did not examine her intentions but immediately prepared to heal her. He fasted for the more numerologically correct three days, rather than the two in Jonas, and poured the oil of benediction over her eyes. Miraculously, Sadalberga's sight was restored, because God hears the prayers of those 'who crucify their wills for his sake'.

The hagiographer then moved to Sadalberga's subsequent careers as wife and nun. Sadalberga allegedly wanted to pursue the religious life but her desires conflicted with her parents' instincts to perpetuate the family's fortunes by a well-arranged marriage. 'Thinking of the succession of children', they married her off to Richramnus, 'a man of mighty generosity' who died scarcely two months later.⁶³ The 'most prudent' Sadalberga remained a widow for two years and, though still a lay woman, behaved as if she were a nun, praying, fasting and giving alms. She soon relocated to the palatial convent at Remiremont, near Luxeuil, where she would have made vows 'had sex not been an impediment and royal obstacles not intruded'.⁶⁴ Sadalberga's availability had come to the attention of Dagobert, 'a man energetic in temperament and bright in pre-eminence and feared not only by those subject to him by oaths of fidelity, but also on account of his reputation among peoples near

⁶¹ *Vita Sadalbergae*, cc. 1–3, pp. 50–2. On the problem of rewriting in early medieval hagiography, see Monique Goullet and Martin Heinzelmann eds., *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'occident médiéval: Transformations formelles et idéologiques*, Beihefte der Francia 58 (Ostfildern, 2003).

⁶² *Vita Sadalbergae*, c. 4, pp. 52–3. ⁶³ *Ibid.*, c. 6, pp. 53–4. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 9, p. 54.

and far'. Fearing the 'anger and ferocity' of the king, Gundoin withdrew Sadalberga from the convent, for Dagobert had arranged for her to marry a Frankish nobleman, Blandinus-Baso, a 'vigorous man, favoured in royal councils' who 'was residing then at the king's court'.⁶⁵ Blandinus received her 'not of her will, since for a long time now she had vowed to involve herself with divine precepts, although with the inducement of her parents, she nevertheless took up marriage at the royal command and for the purpose of producing children'.

While Dagobert might arrange marriages as part of an effort to regulate the distribution of aristocratic power, he had less control over their fate.⁶⁶ Blandinus was left to work out a *modus vivendi* with a woman bent on turning the marriage to her own pious purposes. Sadalberga began to make choices that had the potential to insulate her family from royal interference. In the words of her hagiographer, she took steps 'so that her entire household, not just herself, but her husband as well as children, might make a church of Christ'.⁶⁷ At her instigation, Sadalberga and her husband devoted themselves to Christian works, granting alms to the poor and hospitality to pilgrims. She also consecrated her children. After a period of sterility, which she overcame after a visit to the shrine of St Remigius in Reims, Sadalberga gave birth to three daughters, Saratrude, Ebana and Anstrude; and two sons, one named after her healer Eustasius, and the other named Balduin, a child of 'good character, whom she consecrated to the omnipotent God as with the earlier children'. 'In the process of time' Anstrude, 'regenerated by the grace of baptism by the assent of the whole community, succeeded [her mother] in the care and rule of the sisters'. Through Sadalberga's activities, the family now generated its own prestige independent of the whims of royal favour.

Sadalberga's efforts also transformed the material basis of her family's lordship, as she and her kin concentrated their property in new foundations. Sadalberga noticed the monasteries and nunneries sprouting up owing to the activities of Waldebert and summoned the holy man to her home 'to obtain the grace of benediction from him'. Fired by the biblical injunction that 'all who forsake father, mother, households or fields for my sake will receive a hundredfold and possess eternal life', Sadalberga 'converted her husband, consecrated her children to God and took up the dress of religion'. On the advice of Waldebert and with the agreement of her husband, she founded a convent in the suburb of Langres 'on her paternal inheritance and succession, which she enriched with her own

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 10, p. 55. ⁶⁶ Cf. Geary, *Before France and Germany*, pp. 158–62.

⁶⁷ *Vita Sadalbergae*, c. 11, pp. 55–6.

revenues from the estates of her paternal, hereditary succession'.⁶⁸ She was then joined there by more than a hundred maidens, some free nobles and others from her own service.

Soon Sadalberga began to fret about the 'stability and protection' of the location. 'For while barbarians were far away, nevertheless – since the boundaries of kings were confused on either side – there was an indication of the future danger, which we have since seen.'⁶⁹ The prescient Sadalberga had a foreboding of the 'civil war between the Frankish kings Theuderic and Dagobert', which later ravaged the border region (676–9). The problem was that Sadalberga had set up her monastery 40 miles from Luxeuil 'near the borders of Austrasia, but within Burgundy'.⁷⁰ The family properties with which she had endowed the monastery apparently straddled the contested boundaries between the two kingdoms. That, at any rate, would be the conclusion to draw from the *Life of Columbanus*, which identifies family estates in the villa called Meuse just northeast of Langres in northern Burgundy; and the *Life of Sadalberga*, which puts Sadalberga's birthplace in the Ornois in the southern reaches of Austrasia.⁷¹ The author did not specify the events that prompted Sadalberga to fret about the safety of her foundation, but 'the indication of future danger' might have been a reference to the struggles between the Pippinids and the Wulfoald-Gundoin for the mayorship of Austrasia following Dagobert's death (639). Or it might have pointed to the tensions over the elevation of Grimoald's son Childebert to the kingship (656), and Grimoald's subsequent execution (657) at the instigation of the Neustrian aristocracy.⁷²

Whatever it was that prompted Sadalberga to seek a safer location, she again took council with Waldebert, left the 'soil of her homeland and the paternal abodes' and struck out for Laon, a well-fortified city whose bishops had maintained close ties to Luxeuil.⁷³ Sadalberga and her nuns were greeted 'with the highest favour' by Bishop Attila. 'Rejoicing, he led the holy servants of Christ into the city with a chorus of singing, with psalmody and highest, hymning praises', and ordered his servants to prepare a 'thanksgiving meal for the family of Christ'.⁷⁴ The bishop considered their arrival a 'divine gift', and it is easy to see why. Leaving aside that her settlement in Laon reportedly prompted the exodus of 'monstrous beasts' from the city environs and the removal of the stubborn

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 12, pp. 56–7. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 13, p. 57. ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 12, p. 56.

⁷¹ Jonas, *Vitae Columbani*, bk 2, c. 10, p. 244; *Vita Sadalbergae*, c. 1, p. 50. More generally on the shifting borders during this period, see Louis Dupraz, *Contribution à l'histoire du regnum francorum pendant le troisième quart du VII^e siècle (656–680)* (Fribourg, 1948).

⁷² Jackie Lusse, *Naissance d'une cité: Laon et le Laonnais du V^e–X^e siècles* (Nancy, 1992), p. 204.

⁷³ Hummer, 'Herkunft', p. 28. ⁷⁴ *Vita Sadalbergae*, c. 14, p. 58.

vestiges of paganism and the devilish practice of the blood feud, Sadalberga's foundation promptly attracted over 300 noble maidens and spread its wealth around the city in the form of alms.⁷⁵

Sadalberga's pious bequests are so stereotypical that it is easy to overlook their significance with respect to the perpetuation of family lordship. In the normal course of events, Sadalberga's property would have been dispersed among her children, the largest portion going to her surviving son Balduin. As it turned out, her patrimony was entrusted in whole to the monastic endowment where it would remain undivided as ecclesiastical property. Her grant was then augmented by gifts from other relatives. Sadalberga was soon joined by members of her own family, her brother Leudinus-Bodo and his wife Odila, a noble Frankish woman who contributed to the swelling foundation.⁷⁶ Leudinus, 'illustrious, powerful and flourishing in secular dignity', was persuaded by Odila to join the monastery. 'They set aside the ornaments of the world, converted to God, conferred their property on the monastery and hastened after Sadalberga to Laon.' Leudinus left shortly thereafter to become the bishop of Toul and died a few years later. Before his death, he too founded a nunnery, Bonmoutier (*Bodonis monasterium*), east of Toul in the shadow of the western slope of the Vosges, and entrusted it to the direction of his own daughter, Thietberga.⁷⁷

Sadalberga's older brother astutely recognized the implications of the burgeoning family concern. Seeing that Sadalberga's monastery had grown in wealth and prestige, Fulculfus-Bodo began to agitate for a say in the foundation and withheld 'by illicit usurpation some villas which she had granted [to the monastery] through a series of charters'.⁷⁸ The hagiographer blamed the conflict on greed – 'as it is common for matters of wealth to generate discord among close kin' – and claimed that Fulculfus's heart was softened by Sadalberga's illness and pleas to God. While Fulculfus might have been moved to pity, the *Life* also concedes that he compelled his sister formally to recognize his stake in the foundation: 'He hastened to her and soon with the mediation of God the inviolability of the charters was mutually confirmed.' Since we know

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, cc. 15–17, pp. 58–60. On the early history of Sadalberga's foundation at Laon, see Michèle Gaillard, 'De l'Eigenkloster au monastère royal: l'abbaye Saint-Jean de Laon, du milieu du VII^e siècle au milieu du VIII^e siècle à travers les sources hagiographiques', in Heinzelmann ed., *L'hagiographie*, pp. 249–62.

⁷⁶ *Vita Sadalbergae*, c. 18, p. 60.

⁷⁷ Hummer, 'Herkunft', p. 483 and n. 95; Heinrich Büttner, 'Andlau und der Dagsburger Wald: Zur frühmittelalterlichen Geschichte der Landschaft im Quellgebiet von Saar und Zorn', *Elsaß-Lothringisches Jahrbuch* 20 (1942), pp. 10–27, esp. pp. 15–16 and n. 35.

⁷⁸ *Vita Sadalbergae*, c. 29, p. 66.

that in the eighth century, when the surviving charter evidence hinted at here becomes much more abundant, families continued to exercise usufructuary rights over their donated property, we might infer that Fulculfus was eager to establish access to the reservoir of property accumulating in Sadalberga's cloister.

Shortly thereafter, Sadalberga died. She had designated 'Christ as her heir',⁷⁹ but the family remained the executors of His inheritance with the succession of Sadalberga's daughter Anstrude as abbess.⁸⁰ The foundation essentially operated as a proprietary trust which, similar to the Pippinids, the family controlled through the abbacy. Moreover, it enhanced their dominant position: as men and women from the surrounding kin-groups joined the monastery, the family's influence among the local aristocracy would have grown accordingly.

The Etichonids

In the late seventh century, kin-groups began to establish monasteries more frequently. This heightened attention to monastic foundation is observable in the activities of the Pippinids who, under Pippin of Herstal, founded or co-opted a number of monasteries in northern Austrasia after 690. The accelerated pace of foundation is also noticeable in the Vosges, where the Etichonids turned monasteries into formidable instruments of lordship.⁸¹ In the most extraordinary display of aristocratic continuity, the Etichonids persisted into the eleventh century, an unsurpassed achievement that flowed from their assiduous cultivation of monasticism.

The formative figure among the Etichonids was Adalrich, duke in Alsace in the late seventh century, whose ancestors first emerged in the mid-seventh century as monastic patrons in northern Burgundy.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 12, p. 55. ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 55; *Vita Anstrudis*, c. 4, p. 68.

⁸¹ On the Etichonids see, Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 1–68; Christian Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides aux temps carolingiens et ottoniens', *Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'à 1610) du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, année 1964*, Actes du 89^e Congrès national des Sociétés savantes tenu à Lyon (Paris, 1967), pp. 1–33; Thomas Zotz, 'Etichonen', *Lexicon des Mittelalters* vol. IV (Munich, Zurich, 1989), column 57; Christian Wilsdorf, 'Le monasterium scottonum de Honau et la famille des ducs d'Alsace au VIII^e siècle: Vestiges d'un cartulaire perdu', *Francia* 3 (1975), pp. 1–87; Franz Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Kontinuität früher Adelsfamilien', in Gerd Tellenbach ed., *Studien und Vorarbeiten zur Geschichte des Grossfränkischen und frühdeutschen Adels*, Forschungen zur oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 4 (Freiburg, 1957), pp. 137–84; Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 21–7, 71–91; André Burg, *Le duché d'Alsace au temps de Sainte Odile* (Woerth, 1959); Léon Levillain, 'L'Alsace et les origines lointaines de la maison de France', *Revue d'Alsace* 87 (1947), pp. 175–95, 257–72; Louis Dupraz, 'Le premier duché de Bourgogne: ses titulaires; leur famille; leur politique', in *Mélanges offerts à M. Paul-E. Martin*, Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève 40 (Geneva, 1961), pp. 19–37; Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 9–15.

The earliest history of Adalrich's family is recounted in the *Chronicle of Bèze*, composed by an author in the twelfth century with access to older diplomatic evidence.⁸² The duke's putative grandparents, Duke Amalgar and Aquilina, had founded two monasteries in Burgundy in the 620s, one for women at Brégille, and another for men at Bèze. Similar to other seventh-century families, the couple endowed these monasteries with family property and installed a son and a daughter to run them. A third child, Adalrich, succeeded Amalgar as duke and appears to have been the father of Adalrich, duke in Alsace.

Adalrich of Alsace emerged during the crises that ensued upon the assassination of Childeric II (662–75). He first appeared as part of the faction around Leodegar, bishop of Autun, that in 673 had invited the Austrasian king to assume the kingship of Neustria and Burgundy. His participation in the group can be inferred from his marriage to Berswinda who, if the later *Life of Odilia* can be trusted, was kinswoman to Leodegar.⁸³ Adalrich had also received ducal *honores* in Alsace from Childeric sometime before early March 675, when he appears as duke in Childeric's diploma to the Alsatian monastery at Gregoriental.⁸⁴ According to Bobolenus, Adalrich had succeeded Bonifacius, who had succeeded Sadalberga's father Gundoin, a report which has provoked the conclusion that Gundoin was the first in a line of Alsatian dukes which lasted until the mid-eighth century.⁸⁵ In the light of the fact that his family stemmed from the *pagus Attoariensis* around Dijon,⁸⁶ Adalrich's acquisition of the ducal *honor* in south-Austrasian Alsace is most easily explained by his support for Childeric's bid for kingship in Burgundy.

Adalrich, however, was an opportunist. During the civil war he changed allegiances and threw his support behind the Neustrians and their mayor, Ebroin. His role in the conflict is noted in the *Passion of Leodegar*, which portrays the career of Leodegar and the saint's execution at the hands of Ebroin. Apparently, Adalrich took advantage of the murder of Hector, the *patricius* of Provence and ally of Leodegar, to make a bid for

⁸² John the Monk, *Antiquum Besuensis Abbatiae Chronicon*, in Abbé E. Bougaud and Joseph Garnier eds., *Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon suivie de la Chronique de Saint-Pierre de Bèze*, *Analecta Divionensia: Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire de France et particulièrement à celle de Bourgogne* 5 (Dijon, 1875), pp. 232–48. Cf. Dupraz, 'Le premier duché de Bourgogne', pp. 26–35; and Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 32–7, 48–50.

⁸³ Cf. Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 143–4.

⁸⁴ *Diplomata Regum Francorum e Stirpe Merovingica*, ed. Carlrichard Brühl and Theo Kölzer, with Martina Hartmann and Andrea Stieldorf, 2 vols., *MGH* (Hanover, 2001), vol. I, no. 111.

⁸⁵ Bobolenus, *Vita Germani*, c. 10, p. 37; cf. Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 166–7; Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 61–2, 70–1; Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 7–8; Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 21–5; and Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft', pp. 27–30.

⁸⁶ Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 32–7.

power elsewhere.⁸⁷ He led a campaign against Lyons, but when the assault failed and his prospects for Provence subsequently disintegrated, he abandoned Theuderic and Ebroin. He went over to the Austrasians and was promptly relieved of his Burgundian possessions by Theuderic, who conferred the properties on the foundation at Bèze (679).⁸⁸

Having burnt his bridges in Burgundy, Adalrich devoted himself to building up a lordship in southern Austrasia. On the one hand, his activities as duke were more restricted geographically than those of his immediate predecessors, whose spheres extended east and west of the Vosges. In contrast to the situation under Gundoin and Bonifacius, the civil war had left the Vosges region under the control of different kings and their respective dukes. Within the Austrasian kingdom, Adalrich was duke over an area that stretched from Alsace in the north to the Sornegau in the south; whereas Theotchar operated as duke west of the Vosges in the upper-Moselle valley, an area under the authority of the Neustro-Burgundian king, Theuderic III.⁸⁹ On the other hand, if the events of 675 had bequeathed to Adalrich a dukedom narrower in scope than that of his predecessors, they also had left him one within which he had a freer hand over local affairs.

The surviving evidence suggests that royal authority was distributed more unevenly after the civil wars, strong in areas where the mayors wielded influence, but much weaker in regions beyond their immediate reach. The Merovingian kings, who had been frequent visitors to the royal palace at Marlenheim in the early seventh century, ceased to appear there or anywhere else in Alsace after the mid-seventh century. In the years leading up to the war, royal power presumably remained vibrant in southern Austrasia through the mediation of the mayor Wolfoald, but when mayoral power became firmly centred on northern Austrasia after the war, royal authority became less active in Alsace. Absent too in the region is any evidence of Pippinid power. Pippinid influence was as yet limited to northern Austrasia, and when the Pippinids expanded, they targeted first the traditional bases of Frankish power in the Paris basin and in the mid-Rhine region.⁹⁰ To the extent that Pippin of Herstal and his son Charles Martel were concerned with the southern regions, they took some interest in Metz and Champagne, or moved against the peripheral duchies east of the Rhine. Aside from Pippin of Herstal's brief

⁸⁷ *Passiones Leudegarii Episcopi et Martyris Augustodunensis*, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, Leipzig, 1910), pp. 249–362: bk 1, c. 26, p. 307; cf. Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 242, n. 192.

⁸⁸ *D Merov.*, vol. I, no. 120. ⁸⁹ Cf. *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 213.

⁹⁰ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, pp. 93–145.

intervention in Alemannic affairs in 709, the Pippinids were not active in areas near southern Austrasia until the 720s, and only in the 730s did Pippin's son Charles Martel lead a campaign into Alemannia.⁹¹ Even then, Charles Martel focused his attention on the Alemannic dukes and ignored Alsace.⁹²

Hemmed in by Alemannic power to the east and lacking routine access to the lines of royal patronage dominated by the Pippinids, but blessed with control over a rich landscape, the Etichonids carefully developed their Alsatian territories. It is an oddity of early Etichonid history that, while we know a great deal about their local activities, we know precious little about their participation in the wider world of late Merovingian politics after Adalrich settled down in Alsace. By all appearances, they did not grasp for grander roles in Austrasian affairs, but therein lay the principal value of their example. The Etichonids' experience suggests that the transformation of political order in the late Merovingian period was not so much the result of the weakening of Merovingian power, although that did contribute; rather it was driven by the profound reorganization of the countryside by families and monasteries.

Left to their own devices, the Etichonids consolidated their position in Alsace by monopolizing local power and institutionalizing it in foundations. In other words, an Alsatian dukedom eventually hardened around the Etichonids' activities as monastic patrons. First, they turned their offices into family heirlooms.⁹³ Adalrich was succeeded as duke by his son Adalbert (after 683–723), and Adalbert by his son Liutfrid (723–after 742).⁹⁴ They also dominated the comital office.⁹⁵ When Adalrich seized power in Alsace, he initially installed allies as counts, but soon he assigned the office to his son Adalbert, who became count around 683. After he succeeded his father as duke, Adalbert's successor as count (assuming there was one) is unknown, but in the 720s we find Duke Liutfrid's brother Eberhard holding the title.⁹⁶ This monopoly of major offices presumably allowed the Etichonids wide discretion over the fiscal properties that had been folded into area monasteries.⁹⁷

How quickly, or thoroughly, this dukedom became formalized as a territorial unit is unclear. The sources associate a *ducatus* with Alsace by

⁹¹ Jörg Jarnut, 'Untersuchungen zu den fränkisch-alemannischen Beziehungen in der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 30 (1980), pp. 7–23; see also Dieter Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, 1997), pp. 104–6.

⁹² Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, p. 106. ⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁹⁴ See Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 28–9, 33–6, 182–4.

⁹⁵ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 12–14.

⁹⁶ On Eberhard, see Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 129–31.

⁹⁷ Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 74–5; see also Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 11–14.

the generation of Adalrich's grandsons in the 730s, although only in the Carolingian period do charters explicitly refer to a *ducatus alsacensi*, or 'dukedom of Alsace'. The term *ducatus alsacensi* does appear in Count Eberhard's donation to Murbach (c. 735–7), which survives only in a fifteenth-century copy.⁹⁸ Wilhelm Levison pronounced it trustworthy, but others have drawn attention to particular words that appear to have been interpolated in the high middle ages.⁹⁹ Scholarly opinion has inclined to a mid-eighth-century provenance for most of the text,¹⁰⁰ although the likely interpolation of some technical words does raise questions about a pre-Carolingian provenance of territorial jurisdictions,¹⁰¹ especially when one considers that the term *ducatus alsacensi* next appears in early medieval copies of two charters granted to Murbach by Louis the Pious in 816.¹⁰² It is possible that the term was interpolated into a ninth-century copy of Eberhard's charter, which was then recopied with additional interpolations from later ages and preserved in the extant copy.

Adalrich himself was careful to control existing monasteries as part of a broader effort to establish his lordship in Alsace and the Sornegau. Our chief witness to the process is Bobolenus's *Life of Germanus* which vividly, if unflatteringly, depicts Adalrich's suppression of the 'men of the Sornegau'. The account has been exploited to fill out the larger picture of late Merovingian history, but Bobolenus himself was less worried about the master narrative and constitutional problems than modern historians.¹⁰³ He was immediately concerned to exonerate his former abbot from Adalrich's accusation that the people of the Sornegau had been disloyal to Dukes Gundoin and Bonifacius. Bobolenus pleaded his case neither to royal authorities nor to the Pippinids, who had not yet established their dominance throughout Austrasia by the time the *Life of Germanus* was written. Rather, he brought Germanus's plight to the attention of the regional monastic elite. He addressed his work to Ingofrid, Deicolus and Leodemund, the abbots of Luxeuil, Lure and Grandval, respectively; and thus he directs our attention to the world of local power brokers and the dynamics of regional lordship.

According to the *Life of Germanus*, Gundoin had been succeeded by Duke Bonifacius and then by 'Adalrich, or Eticho', who 'wickedly began oppressing the people in the vicinity of the monastery and to allege that

⁹⁸ *Regesta Alsatiæ*, no. 127. ⁹⁹ Wildorf, 'Honau', pp. 62–4.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 4–5.

¹⁰¹ Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft', p. 28. ¹⁰² *Regesta Alsatiæ*, nos. 436–7.

¹⁰³ See for example, Keller, 'Fränkische Herrschaft', pp. 27–30; Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 4–14; Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 14–18; Dupraz, *Contribution*, p. 100, n. 1; Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 35–6, 166–7; and Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 233.

they had always been rebels against his predecessors'.¹⁰⁴ The inhabitants denied it, but Adalrich 'began to afflict them in many ways'. He targeted the *centenarius*, the de facto count in the area, presumably so he could replace him with his own man, Count Ericho.¹⁰⁵ He summoned the *centenarius* of the valley and 'ordered them [i.e. the people of the Sornegau] into exile'. Although it is impossible to assess the accuracy of the charge in the absence of alternative accounts, the stakes are easy enough to make out. If Adalrich were able to make the accusation of rebellion stick, he would have a legitimate reason to confiscate property. In the case of the *centenarius*, this would have entailed the seizure of fiscal properties he oversaw, and their transfer to the administering hands of Count Ericho. The problem was that the property of those targeted for exile, and probably some of the fiscal property, was bound up with the endowment of Grandval.¹⁰⁶ It turns out that Adalrich was harassing people anchored to the area by their association with the monastery and who, for that reason, could not so easily be run out of the valley.

Bobolenus's account reveals that the monastery at Grandval had become a focus of the aristocracy in the Sornegau. Opposition to Adalrich began to coalesce around Germanus, who stepped forward to plead for the inhabitants of the district. Whether Germanus opposed Adalrich from the outset, or only after the new duke resorted to heavy-handed tactics, is unclear. In any case, when Germanus learned that Adalrich had entered from one end of the valley with a regiment of 'iniquitous' Alemanni, and that Adalrich's lieutenant Adalmund had entered with a great force from the other, Germanus went to meet the duke 'with the relics of saints, books and the provost of the monastery, Randoald'.¹⁰⁷ Along the way, Germanus was manhandled by some 'wicked men full of the devil', but he eventually arrived and found Adalrich taking counsel with Count Ericho in the basilica of St Maurice. 'Enemy of God,' Germanus thundered, 'why have you trodden on Christian men? Why do you not fear to lead my monastery into ruin, which I myself have built?'

Daunted perhaps by the resistance coalescing around Germanus, and reluctant to alienate the monastery and its patron families, Adalrich came to some sort of an understanding with the abbot. The passage is unclear,

¹⁰⁴ Bobolenus, *Vita Germani*, c. 10, p. 37.

¹⁰⁵ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 10–12; on *centenarii* in general, see Alexander Callender Murray, 'From Roman Gaul to Frankish Gaul: "Centenarii" and "Centenae" in the Administration of the Merovingian Kingdom', *Traditio* 44 (1988), pp. 59–100.

¹⁰⁶ On Dagobert I's probable involvement in the foundation of Grandval, see Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 4–9.

¹⁰⁷ Bobolenus, *Vita Germani*, c. 11, pp. 37–8.

but the duke promised to make amends and extended a *wadium*, some sort of pledge or recompense for the destruction,¹⁰⁸ which Germanus, unwisely it turns out, refused to accept. The environs of the monastery continued to be ravaged ‘as if by the biting of wolves’, and homes were destroyed with fire. So Germanus set out again with Randoald to confront the ‘barbarous people’. Along the way they were set upon by ‘wicked men, full of the devil’, who despoiled them and ran them through with spears.¹⁰⁹

Adalrich probably did not want to destroy the monastery, as Bobolenus had Germanus suggest in his meeting with the duke. We can arrive at a different interpretation of Adalrich’s motives by juxtaposing Bobolenus’s testimony with the patterns of activity established by Adalrich’s predecessors and by Adalrich’s own family. The accusation of disloyalty to Gundoin and Bonifacius might have been contrived, but it does reveal that Adalrich was careful to present himself as ruling in continuity with his popular predecessors. The Gundoins, as we have seen, had maintained excellent relations with area foundations and had endowed several monasteries. Duke Bonifacius, an otherwise shadowy figure in the sources, was involved in the foundation of Gregoriental in Alsace (c. 662)¹¹⁰ and appears in the Weissenburg codex as that monastery’s earliest donor (661).¹¹¹ It is probably no coincidence that Adalrich first appears as duke in Alsace in Childeric’s royal diploma to Gregoriental,¹¹² and secondly in the *Life of Germanus*, attempting to consolidate his hold on Gundoin’s foundation at Grandval. Adalrich did not want to destroy the monastery; he wanted to win it over, albeit on his terms, and must have done so, since the monastery would remain a bastion of Etichonid lordship deep into the tenth century.

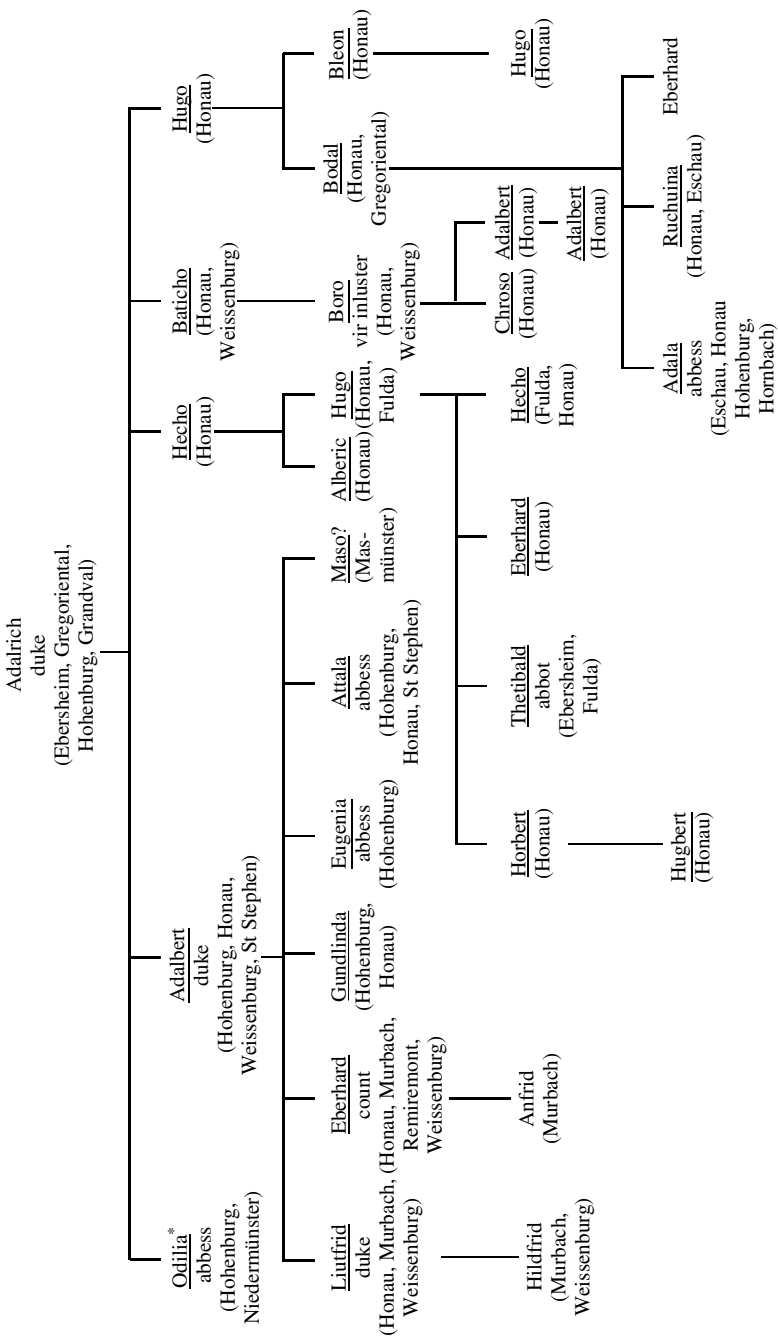
Adalrich did not simply co-opt existing monasteries; he and his progeny rooted themselves firmly in Alsace with an impressive series of new foundations (see table 2). Adalrich, his daughter Odilia, his son Adalbert, and his grandsons Liutfrid and Eberhard established a network of monasteries that bound Etichonid fortunes to Alsace down to the end of the millennium. Whether goaded by guilt for having persecuted two saints, Germanus and Leodegar,¹¹³ or simply driven by the exigencies of lordship, Adalrich founded two more monasteries sometime between 680 and

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 38: ‘Coepit autem beatus Germanus alloquire eum et dicere: “Inimice Dei et veritatis, cur ingressus es super homines christianos? Cur non pertimescis ad naufragium perdere monasterium meum, quem ipse aedificavi?” At ille veniam postulat de commisso scelere; illi vero falsa humilitate wadium suum in manum dare voluit. Sed ille rennuuit eum accipere, promittens se de omnibus satis esse facturum.’

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 12, pp. 38–9. ¹¹⁰ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 44. ¹¹¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 203.

¹¹² *D Merov.*, vol. I, no. 111. ¹¹³ See Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d’Alsace*, pp. 17–18.

Table 2. *The early Etichonids and associated monasteries*



*The underlined names appear in the Honau genealogy.

700 in Alsace: Ebersheim, located on the plain in north-central Alsace, and dedicated to the honour of St Maurice, patron of the Burgundian monastery of St Maurice;¹¹⁴ and the convent Hohenburg, erected in north-central Alsace on the site of an old Roman mountain-top fortress.¹¹⁵ The mountain today is known as Mount St Odile, after Adalrich's daughter, Odilia, who served as Hohenburg's first abbess and founded another cloister at the foot of the mountain, Niedermünster.¹¹⁶ Shortly thereafter, his son Adalbert established the nunnery of St Stephen in Strasburg, the ancient episcopal seat of northern Alsace,¹¹⁷ and installed his daughter Attala as the first abbess.¹¹⁸

The precise set of circumstances surrounding the beginnings of these foundations cannot be adduced, since testimony comes to us only through later sources, but contemporary documentation from other foundations attests to their general accuracy.¹¹⁹ In 722, Duke Adalbert founded another monastery, Honau, on an island in the Rhine north of Strasburg.¹²⁰ In a now familiar pattern, Adalbert co-founded the monastery with a group of Irish monks under a certain Abbot Benedict.¹²¹ Similarly, six years later Count Eberhard lavishly endowed the monastery of Murbach in the Vosges in south-central Alsace.¹²² Although the abbey of Weissenburg was not founded by the Etichonids, between 734 and 742 Eberhard, his brother Liutfrid and their cousin Boro accounted for seven donations to this monastery, located just north of Alsace in the Speyergau.¹²³ Another cousin, Bodol, son of Hugo, gave property to Gregoriental in 748.¹²⁴ If later legends can be believed, Eberhard and Liutfrid had a third brother, Maso, who is said to have founded the

¹¹⁴ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 66, 68.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 71; cf. Medard Barth, *Handbuch der elsässischen Kirchen im Mittelalter*, Etudes générales de la Société d'histoire de l'Eglise d'Alsace, nouvelle série: Forschungen zur Kirchengeschichte des Elsass 4 (Strasbourg, 1960), columns 1013–16.

¹¹⁶ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 77; see also Jacques Legros, *Le Mont Sainte-Odile* (Paris, 1988), pp. 103–7.

¹¹⁷ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 74.

¹¹⁸ *Vita Beatissimæ Dei Virginis Athalæ*, ed. Medard Barth, *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte* 2 (1927), pp. 114–15.

¹¹⁹ The foundations of Hohenburg, St Stephen's and Ebersheim are told, respectively, in the tenth-century *Vita Odiliae*, the thirteen-century *Vita Attalæ* and two other documents composed in the high medieval period, the *Chronicon Ebersheimense* and a *Testament* of Odilia; see Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 42–85; Alfons Dopsch, 'Die Ebersheimer Urkundenfälschungen und ein bisher unbeachtetes Dienstrecht aus dem 12. Jahrhundert', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 19 (1898), pp. 577–614; Medard Barth, 'Die Legende und Verehrung der hl. Attala, der ersten Aebtissin von St Stephan in Strassburg', *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte* 2 (1927), pp. 89–198, esp. pp. 106–10; Hans Hirsch, 'Die Urkundenfälschungen des Klosters Ebersheim und die Entstehung des Chronicon Ebersheimense', in Halvdan Koht ed., *Festschrift Hans Nabholz* (Zurich, 1934), pp. 23–53; and Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 76–81.

¹²⁰ Wilsdorf, 'Honau', p. 4, 78; *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 100. ¹²¹ Wilsdorf, 'Honau', pp. 53–5.

¹²² *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 112, 113. ¹²³ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 2, 8–14. ¹²⁴ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 160.

monastery Masmünster in southern Alsace.¹²⁵ Thus, from Weissenburg in the north to Grandval in the south, Adalrich and his heirs had thoroughly embedded themselves within Alsace.

Whence the Etichonid lords had acquired the properties they donated to these foundations is unclear. Adalrich had come from Burgundy and scarcely could have been endowed with ancestral properties in Alsace. From their dominant position, Adalrich and his progeny could have commandeered fiscal assets in the area and used them to endow monastic foundations. If this were the case, the extant sources bear no trace of it. The charters of second- and third-generation Etichonid donors claim that the properties had been inherited from their fathers. The family might have come into some of this wealth through intermarriage with the local nobility¹²⁶ or, as is probable by inference from Adalrich's suppression of Grandval, by confiscation in the context of the civil war. It is tempting to speculate that the impressive expansion of monasticism in Etichonid Alsace was due in part to an effort to legitimize ill-gotten gains by handing over seized assets to ecclesiastical institutions where they would be safe from contestation and, as we shall see shortly, available for continued family use. If the slightly later evidence from Freising provides any insight, courts gave little weight to the origins of property before it was gifted to an ecclesiastical institution; the simple fact of donation was almost always decisive.¹²⁷

Within the space of three generations the Etichonids created a hereditary lordship in Alsace. While offices lent the family prestige and granted them influence over valuable fiscal property, just as important (if not more so for future generations) were the practices by which the men and women of the kin-group invested enormous amounts of their property in monastic foundations. In this way, the Etichonids not only became anchored to the region but they, as well as the Gundoins and Wolfoald-Gundoins, also helped to cultivate a local order that eventually was receptive to the expanding Carolingians.

¹²⁵ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 87–8; Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 159.

¹²⁶ The Etichonids might have been related to the Wolfoald-Gundoins, although the proposed genealogical connections are not firm, cf. Ebling, *Prosopographie*, pp. 243–5.

¹²⁷ Brown, *Unjust Seizure*, pp. 73–123.

CONQUEST AND CONTINUITY

For contemporaries, the story of Carolingian expansion was largely a tale of conquest. From the reign of Charles Martel on, chroniclers trained a steady eye on the Carolingians' relentless subjugation of the territories beyond the Frankish heartlands of Neustria and Austrasia. To Carolingian military pressure succumbed Alemannia (730, 742–6), Aquitaine (731–6, 760–8), Bavaria (725, 728, 743, 749, 788), Brittany (786, 799), Burgundy and Provence (732–6), Frisia (734) and Saxony (720–4, 738, 747, 753, 758, 772–804). Modern treatments of the period, taking their cue from the chronicles, also have made military success central to the story of Carolingian expansion.¹ Because these conquests often left in their wake a residue of documents drawn up to defend rights and claims, the territories beset by the Carolingians have presented the points of departure for a range of insightful studies which have illuminated the processes by which the Carolingians absorbed conquered territories.²

¹ Heinrich Brunner, 'Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge des Lehenwesens', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 8 (1887), pp. 1–38; Lynn T. White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 1–38; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London, New York, 1983), pp. 28–69; Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, pp. 79–120, 145–50; Riché, *The Carolingians*, pp. 25–116.

² Alemannia: see Michael Borgolte, *Geschichte der Grafschaften Alemanniens in fränkischer Zeit* (Sigmaringen, 1984); Aquitaine: Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine, des Wisigoths aux Arabes, 418–781: Naissance d'une région* (Paris, 1979); Bavaria: Brown, *Unjust Seizure*; Brittany: Smith, *Province and Empire*; Burgundy: Josef Semmler, 'Die Aufrichtung der karolingischen Herrschaft im nördlichen Burgund um VIII^e Jahrhundert', in *Langres et ses évêques, VIII^e–XI^e siècles: Aux origines d'une seigneurie ecclésiastique: Actes du colloque Langres-Ellwangen, Langres, 28 juin 1985* (Langres, 1986), pp. 19–42; and Annalena Staudte-Lauber, 'Carolus princeps regionem Burgundie sagaciter penetravit: Zur Schlacht von Tours und Poitiers und dem Eingreifen Karl Martells in Burgund', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 79–100; Carinthia and the southeastern frontier: Herwig Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum: Das Weißbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien* (Vienna, Cologne, Graz, 1979); and Herwig Wolfram, *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas: Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung, 378–907* (Vienna, 1987), pp. 165–92, 253–82; Lombardy: Karl Schmid, 'Zur Ablösung der Langobardenherrschaft durch die Franken',

Conquest and continuity

Alsace, a territory brought under Carolingian control peacefully, allows us to view Carolingian expansion from another angle, from the perspective of the family's affective, rather than military, power. In contrast to the many regions where high-handed conquest left triumphant Carolingians in a dominant position to impose peace, in Alsace Carolingian power – itself generated and sustained by an impressive network of family monasteries – flowed easily into the channels of power etched out by local monasteries and kin-groups. The Alsatian materials, uncontaminated by the blunt intrusiveness of conquest, permit an unobstructed view of the subtle interplay of change and continuity as the Carolingians brought early medieval Alsace under their control.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE ETICHONID DUKEDOM

As we have seen, the Etichonids came to dominate Alsace by monopolizing regional offices and by establishing and patronizing monasteries. At first, the Carolingians paid little heed to the Etichonids' activities, turning their attention instead to bigger game in neighbouring Alemannia. Only after the final suppression of the Alemannic dukes (742–6) did the Carolingians dissolve the Etichonid dukedom and extend their protection to monasteries in the area. While some have speculated that the Etichonids and the Carolingians had been antipathetic to one another,³ the sources offer scant support for such notions.⁴ Ingrid Heidrich has argued that Theuderic's diplomas in Alsace were given out with the acquiescence of both the Etichonids and Charles Martel, but then – presumably on the basis of comparative evidence of initial cooperation, but then soured relations, between Charles Martel and the Alemannic dukes – sees the spate of Etichonid donations to Murbach, Weissenburg and Honau as evidence of 'eine verhaltene Rivalität' between Charles Martel and the Etichonids. A degree of competition between the families is possible, but the donations could just as easily be interpreted to reflect general support for Charles Martel in the face of the Alemannic dukes' well-attested aggression in Alsace.

in Karl Schmid, *Gebetsgedenken und adliges Selbstverständnis im Mittelalter: Ausgewählte Beiträge. Festgabe zu seinem sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1983), pp. 268–304; Provence: Patrick J. Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence: The Rhône Basin at the Dawn of the Carolingian Age* (Philadelphia, 1985); and Saxony: Walther Lammers ed., *Die Eingliederung der Sachsen in das Frankenreich* (Darmstadt, 1970).

³ Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', pp. 5–7; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 148; and Ingrid Heidrich, 'Die urkundliche Grundausrüstung der elsässischen Klöster, St Gallens und der Reichenau in der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts', in Peter Classen ed., *Die Gründungsurkunden der Reichenau, Vorträge und Forschungen 24* (Sigmaringen, 1977), pp. 31–62, esp. pp. 32–41.

⁴ Langenbeck, 'Probleme', p. 79.

The evidence suggests that the Etichonids had been sympathetic to the Carolingians as early as the 720s, when Charles Martel first moved on Alemannia. In 722, Charles Martel had defeated a combined force of Alemans and Bavarians and subsequently, in a pattern reminiscent of his ancestors, extended his protection to the monastery at Reichenau.⁵ By contrast with Alemannia, Charles Martel is not known to have troubled himself directly with affairs across the Rhine in Alsace. At least no evidence of any visits survives. Nonetheless, Alsace seems to have remained firm Frankish territory and its Etichonid lords receptive to Carolingian overlordship.⁶ Etichonid cooperation can be inferred from the subsequent careers of Abbots Pirmin and Heddo, who flourished in Etichonid Alsace after fleeing the monastery at Reichenau, which was under Charles's protection and the target of repeated Alemannic hostility.⁷

Pirmin quickly reappeared in Alsace and co-founded Murbach with Count Eberhard (727).⁸ On the basis of an immediate grant of immunity and protection from Theuderic IV to Murbach (727), it has been argued that the Etichonids sought to protect themselves from Charles Martel.⁹ The grant of protection, interpolated in the latter eighth century into an original immunity of Theuderic IV, actually dates to the reign of Pippin, when Murbach first came under Carolingian control.¹⁰ And subsequent review of the immunity has concluded that Theuderic's grants in both Alsace and Alemannia seem to be in accord with Charles Martel's own ambitions.¹¹ Pirmin left Murbach shortly thereafter and went on to found a number of lesser monasteries throughout Alsace

⁵ *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, *MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1891), a. 722, p. 2; and Hermann of Reichenau, *Chronicon*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, *MGH SS* 5 (Hanover, 1844), pp. 67–133: a. 724, p. 98; cf. Franz Beyerle, 'Zur Gründungsgeschichte der Abtei Reichenau und des Bistums Konstanz', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 46: *Kanonistische Abteilung* 15 (1926), pp. 512–31, esp. pp. 512–16; Arnold Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini: Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 6 (Munich, 1972), pp. 97–101; Michael Richter, 'Neues zu den Anfängen des Klosters Reichenau', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 144 (1996), pp. 1–18; Heidrich, 'Grundausstattung', pp. 44–62; and Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen*, p. 105.

⁶ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 101–2, 107–8.

⁷ Hermann, *Chronicon*, a. 727, p. 98; *Annales Sancti Amandi, Tiliaci, Laubacenses et Petaviani*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, *MGH SS* 1 (Hanover, 1826), pp. 6–18; a. 730, pp. 8–9; cf. Jarnut, 'Untersuchungen'; and Jörg Jarnut, 'Alemannien zur Zeit der Doppelherrschaft der Hausmeier Karlmann und Pippin', in Rudolf Schieffer ed., *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum: Referat beim Wissenschaftliche Colloquium zum 75. Geburtstag von Eugen Ewig am 28. Mai 1988*, Beihefte der *Francia* 22 (Sigmariningen, 1990), pp. 57–66.

⁸ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 111, 112; cf. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 212–16.

⁹ Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, p. 157.

¹⁰ Kölzer, *D Merov.* vol. I, p. 469; and Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*, pp. 90–4.

¹¹ Heidrich, 'Grundausstattung', pp. 40, 61–2.

before passing away at Hornbach in the northern Vosges.¹² At Murbach, he was succeeded around 730 by Abbot Romanus,¹³ whose chapter reportedly was swelled by twelve monks from Pirmin's foundation at Reichenau.¹⁴ Romanus remained close to Eberhard and his wife Himiltrude, both of whom made additional donations to supplement the original endowment.¹⁵ Romanus also must have been sympathetic to Carolingian interests: when rebel Alemans advanced into Alsace in 744, Romanus had to flee from Murbach presumably because he was considered loyal to Charles Martel's sons, Pippin and Carloman.¹⁶

Heddo, soon restored in 732 as abbot of Reichenau by Charles Martel, left for Alsace two years later. Whether he withdrew under pressure or simply for better opportunities is unknown. Whatever the case, Charles Martel appointed the loyal Heddo as bishop of Strasburg (734–after 760).¹⁷ Heddo subsequently founded the monastery at Ettenheim south of Strasburg east of the Rhine¹⁸ and appeared among the circle of ecclesiastical reformers closely connected to Charles Martel and his sons. He participated in Boniface's reform councils, one c. 738 which sought to reorganize the Bavarian and Alemannic episcopacies, and another in 742, which attempted to instil episcopal discipline among east Frankish bishops.¹⁹ He also was among a synod of Frankish bishops addressed by Pope Zacharias in 748;²⁰ and he served as witness when Chrodegang, bishop of Metz and a close associate of the Carolingians, founded the monastery at Gorze.²¹ We know nothing of Heddo's relations with the Etichonids, but presumably they were warm: Strasburg was a seat of ducal lordship and it is difficult to imagine Heddo surviving for long against the determined opposition of the resident duke, Liutfrid.²²

Despite, or perhaps because of, Etichonid acquiescence to Carolingian suzerainty, Pippin began to exert more direct control over Alsace after the Alemannic revolts of the 740s. He appears to have let the Etichonid

¹² Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*, pp. 49–52. ¹³ Cf. *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 117.

¹⁴ Hermann, *Chronicon*, a. 731, p. 98. ¹⁵ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 122, 127.

¹⁶ *Annales Alamannici*, ed. Walter Lendi, in Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik: Die Murbacher Annalen mit Edition* (Freiburg, 1971), pp. 146–92: a. 744, pp. 150–1.

¹⁷ Hermann, *Chronicon*, a. 734, p. 98. ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 734, p. 98.

¹⁹ Boniface, *Epistolae S. Bonifatii et Lulli*, ed. Michael Tangl, *MGH Epistolae Selectae* 1 (Berlin, 1916), no. 44, p. 70; and no. 56, p. 99; cf. Philippe Jaffé ed., *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ab Conditis Ecclesiae ad Annum post Christum Natum MCXCVIII*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1885; reprint: Graz, 1956), p. 259; and *Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. Alfred Boretius and Victor Krause, *MGH Legum sectio 2*, 2 vols. (Hanover, 1883–97), vol. 1, no. 10, p. 24. On Frankish reform at this time, see Martin Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the Regula canoniconum in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge, 2005).

²⁰ Zacharias, in *Epistolae S. Bonifatii et Lulli*, no. 82, p. 182.

²¹ *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Gorze*, no. 4; cf. *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 177.

²² Liutfrid transacted several donations to Weissenburg in Strasburg, *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 10, 11 and 13.

dukedom lapse when count Eberhard and Duke Liutfrid died, by all accounts, without heirs.²³ The narrative of Etichonid decline is not entirely clear, but Eberhard had gone blind and retired from worldly affairs around 735/7, retreated to Remiremont in Burgundy and passed away in 747, either there or at Murbach.²⁴ In his last donation to Murbach, Eberhard made the monastery his legal heir,²⁵ apparently after the death of his only son Anfrid.²⁶ Liutfrid disappeared from the sources in 742, although where or when he died is unknown. He and his son Hildifrid appeared together last in 742 in a charter of Weissenburg dated to the 'first year of the reign of lord Carloman, duke, after the death of Charles [Martell], prince, mayor of the palace'.²⁷ If the titulature in the charter is suggestive of political solidarity, and if the date of Liutfrid's last charter is significant with respect to Carloman's simultaneous crackdown on Alemannia, we might surmise that the duke and his son had lost their lives fighting for the Carolingians in Alemannia.²⁸

Whatever their fates, the Etichonids had remained loyal to their Carolingian overlords.²⁹ The disappearance of the ducal office in Alsace was a comparatively benign process, the consequence of a broader Carolingian policy to suppress dukes throughout the realm, either forcefully, as in Alemannia, or simply by letting them lapse, as in Alsace and Provence.³⁰ The issue for the Carolingians was military control. To that end, they replaced dukes, who had the power to command an army, with counts, who at least in theory represented royal rights in localities. So, Pippin and his sons Carloman and Charlemagne promptly exercised their prerogatives as rulers and raised up Warin and Ruthard, two prominent Alemans with Carolingian sympathies, as counts in Alemannia and perhaps in southern Alsace.³¹

Striking is the general absence of counts in Alsace after the Carolingian takeover. Ruthard appears to have owned some southern Alsatian properties, but apart from a sale of property to Abbot Fulrad of St Denis, which took place in Marlenheim, the site of the old Merovingian palace, he

²³ Wildorf, 'Honau', pp. 59–72; Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 107–8; Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 78–80; Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 14–15; and Geuenich, 'Elsaß', p. 187.

²⁴ Wildorf, 'Honau', pp. 67–8. ²⁵ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 127.

²⁶ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 160. ²⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 2.

²⁸ Cf. André M. Burg, 'Das elsässische Herzogtum: Ein Überblick', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 117 (1969), pp. 83–95, esp. pp. 94–5.

²⁹ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 106–8.

³⁰ Karl Ferdinand Werner, 'Les principautés périphériques dans le monde Franc du VIII^e siècle', in *I problemi dell'Occidente nel secolo VIII*, *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 20 (Spoleto, 1973), pp. 483–514; Archibald R. Lewis, 'The Dukes in the *Regnum Francorum*', A. D. 550–751', *Speculum* 51 (1976), pp. 381–410; Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence*, pp. 119–25.

³¹ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 15–19.

cooperated with Bishop Heddo of Strasburg to support several new monasteries, not in Alsace per se, but east of the Rhine in Alemannia. Warin did supervise some fiscal properties attached to the royal monastery in Gregoriental but is recorded as having done so only once, and he spent most of his time, so far as the extant evidence can attest, in Alemannia.³² In other words, Ruthard and Warin left a much weaker impression in the southern Alsatian records than they did in the Alemannic, and neither left any mark in northern Alsace.³³ Their successors left an even fainter impression. The Alemannic counts of the Udalriching and Erchangar families who succeeded them appear to have operated in Alsace as private landowners rather than as counts, at least until the 840s.³⁴

The weight of evidence suggests that the Carolingians developed mechanisms of control focused on monasteries rather than counts. After suppressing the ducal office, Carolingian kings brought a number of Alsatian monasteries under their protection with a variety of grants and confirmations of rights. While this behaviour was not unprecedented, since it had long been the obligation of Frankish kings to protect monasteries and churches, the scale in Alsace (and elsewhere) was.³⁵ Within the space of two generations, Carolingian rulers systematically co-opted the most prestigious monasteries: Pippin granted immunities to Weissenburg (c. 751–68), Honau (758), Murbach (c. 751–62) and perhaps Ebersheim (c. 751–68);³⁶ his son Carloman to Grandval (c. 768–71), Gregoriental (769), Ebersheim (770) and Honau (770);³⁷ and Charlemagne to Murbach (772, 775, c. 789–91), Honau (778), Ebersheim (810), Gregoriental (c. 768–814) and Hohenburg (c. 768–814).³⁸ These immunities – where the full accounts survive – indicate that the first Carolingian kings confirmed gifts of fiscal

³² Michael Borgolte, *Die Grafen Alemanniens in merowingischer und karolingischer Zeit: Eine Prosopographie* (Sigmaringen, 1986), pp. 282–7.

³³ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 17–18.

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 20–8; Borgolte, *Die Grafen Alemanniens*, pp. 105–9, 248–54.

³⁵ Cf. Josef Semmler, 'Pippin III. und die fränkischen Klöster', *Francia* 3 (1975), pp. 88–146, esp. 97–103.

³⁶ Honau and Murbach: *Diplomata Karolinorum* 1: *Diplomata Pippini, Carlomanni, Caroli Magni*, ed. Engelbert Mühlbacher, with Alfons Dopsch, Johann Lechner and Michael Tangl, *MGH* (Hanover, 1906), nos. 10 and 17, respectively; Ebersheim: *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 213; and Weissenburg: *Diplomata Ottonis II.*, ed. Theodor Sickel, *MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae* 2, 1 (Hanover, 1888), no. 15.

³⁷ Grandval: *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 54; cf. Pascal Ladner, 'Die älteren Herrscherurkunden für Moutier-Grandval', *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 74 (1974), pp. 41–68, esp. pp. 42–7; Gregoriental: *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 45; Ebersheim: Bruckner, *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 219; Honau: *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 50.

³⁸ Murbach: *D Karol.* vol. I, nos. 64, 95; Bruckner, *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 350; Honau: *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 119; Ebersheim: *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 210; cf. comments by Bruckner, *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 412; Gregoriental: *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 430; Hohenburg: *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 503.

property made by their (Merovingian) predecessors and imply that they had enlarged them with additional donations.³⁹ All of this was done without lifting a sword.

With hindsight, this was an astute response to the Alsatian situation. The concentration of monasteries developed by the Etichonids and fortified with Merovingian grants made ecclesiastical institutions natural targets to be won over by Carolingian favour. The initiative was also a logical extension of the Carolingian family's own inclinations since the seventh century. As we have seen, their Pippinid ancestors had promoted monasticism and extended protection to a number of influential Neustrian and Austrasian monasteries during their rise to dominance.⁴⁰ Having themselves risen out of the aristocracy to the kingship, the early Carolingians were keenly aware of the ability of foundations to augment family lordships and, not surprisingly, were careful to assert control over monasteries at a rate that contrasted perceptibly with their late Merovingian predecessors.

Striking too is the care with which Carolingian rulers had their grants drawn up to accentuate royal authority.⁴¹ By contrast with Merovingian royal charters, which were frequently addressed to specific officials,⁴² early Carolingian grants almost never concede an intermediate level of authority to explicitly named dukes or counts.⁴³ Although grants bestowed upon monasteries by Carolingian kings were still requested by explicitly identified abbots, the charters are much more impersonal, addressed either to no one at all or generally 'to all the bishops, abbots, dukes, counts, *domestici*, *vicarii* and *centenarii* and all our *missi* now and in the future'.⁴⁴ Particular aristocrats might have been involved in the negotiations leading up to these grants, but the form of the documents under Pippin and his sons Carloman and Charlemagne declares unambiguously the prerogative of kings to bestow what they willed.

We can observe these changes in royal pretension in diplomas granted to the Etichonid foundation at Honau before and after Pippin had become king. Sometime between 748 and 751, and at the request of Abbot Duban, Pippin took Honau into his protection. The diploma

³⁹ See in nn. 36–38 Pippin's immunities to Honau and Murbach and Carloman's to Grandval and Gregoriental, as well as Charlemagne's to the same monasteries, which largely repeat those of his father and brother.

⁴⁰ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, pp. 96–105. ⁴¹ Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 99–101.

⁴² Kölzer, *D Merov.*, p. xxii; Heidrich, 'Grundausstattung', pp. 52–4; cf. *D Merov.*, nos. 98, 111, 132, 186.

⁴³ Carloman did inform Warin of his grant of immunity to Gregoriental (769), *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 45; but this is the only case, at least in the Alsatian materials, where a Carolingian ruler did so.

⁴⁴ Cf. above, nn. 36–8.

depicts Etichonid lords as partners, decreeing that no one should disturb 'any property handed over for the cause of God under Duke Adalbert and my late father Charles [Martel]'.⁴⁵ In 758, Abbot Duban approached Pippin again, this time to petition for a charter of immunity. Pippin granted Duban and his successors 'complete immunity' for property that the monastery 'is seen to hold by our gift or the gift of whomever'. Pippin informed secular officials that they had no jurisdiction 'in villas anywhere in our realm that have by royal largess or by the largess of private and good men accrued to this church and which God-fearing men before had conferred'.⁴⁶ Missing in this charter of immunity, put out after Pippin had assumed the kingship, is any admission that the monastery had once been under the control of Etichonid dukes. Etichonid patrons and associated donors simply had become anonymous 'private', 'good' or 'God-fearing' men.

ETICHONID CONTINUITY

The transition from Etichonid to Carolingian control should not obscure the role that Carolingian grants to monasteries played in safeguarding prevailing property rights. When Duban asked Pippin to confirm 'whatever has been legally acquired by royal contribution or the donation of private men', whether it be 'villas, houses, labourers, vineyards, forests, pastures, meadows or benefices', the abbot of Honau basically was receiving assurances that donations made during the time of the Etichonid dukes would be recognized as valid.⁴⁷ Royal recognition could also be granted to gifts lacking a documentary basis. At the request of Abbot Beatus in 775, Charlemagne confirmed the records of donations (*instrumenta chartarum*) conferred by 'kings, queens and other God-fearing men', 'which have become lost due to neglect'.⁴⁸ While such decrees have been interpreted as royal support of ecclesiastical rights at the expense of lay people, it should be pointed out that much of Honau's property would have been exploited jointly by the monks and their patron families. Although we have no explicit evidence of that from Honau, most of whose records were destroyed in the Thirty Years War, we do know that Etichonids had continued to access their donations via precarial grant at Weissenburg, where Count Eberhard petitioned for usufructuary

⁴⁵ *Diplomata Maiorum Domus e Stirpe Arnulforum*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, *MGH Diplomatum Imperii* 1 (Hanover, 1872), pp. 89–110; no. 20; on the provenance of the diploma, see Wilsdorf, 'Honau', pp. 9–10.

⁴⁶ *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 10. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 11. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 100.

rights;⁴⁹ and at Murbach, where Eberhard's nephew, Hildifrid, and a probable affine, Hildrad, received property that the 'illustrious man Eberhard had given for the remedy of his soul'.⁵⁰ In other words, the series of royal grants to Honau ensured that this erstwhile Etichonid foundation remained a haven of family property and effectively protected it from seizure.

Indeed, had the abbots invited the early Carolingian kings into Honau's affairs for the purpose of eliminating the property rights of patron families, we would be hard-pressed to explain why Etichonids should have continued to donate to an institution that wanted to claim exclusive control over so much of their wealth. For if the ducal line had failed, the family had not, and it continued to produce eager monastic patrons. A most remarkable document from Honau, a 'genealogy of the descendants of Duke Adalrich', shows that members of the family continued to donate property for decades after Honau had passed to Carolingian control.⁵¹ The genealogy, preserved within a fifteenth-century cartulary of Honau, was originally composed probably between the tenth and the twelfth centuries from now lost donation charters apparently to commemorate the Etichonids who had endowed the monastery.⁵² Greeted with skepticism and dismissed as a forgery by Christian Pfister, exhaustive analyses have since established its worth as a source for the early Etichonids.⁵³ It records twenty-six descendants of Adalrich over four generations – through the Carolingian takeover in the mid-eighth century – down to the early ninth century (see table 2 above). Although the genealogy has been plundered for its rich genealogical information, it also bears witness to the continuing association of third- and fourth-generation Etichonids as donors of property to Honau after the transition to Carolingian rule. After listing the descendants of Adalrich, the author of the notice concluded: 'All these gave their lands in various places to the

⁴⁹ Cf. *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 8 and 9.

⁵⁰ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 125 and 128. Hildifrid appears as Liutfrid's son in *Trad. Wiz.* no. 2. The relationship of Hildrad is less clear, but we can infer a close relationship in that nominal elements, such as the *hild* shared by Hildifrid and Hildrad, often were passed down within families. They might have been brothers, or they could have been cousins related to one another through Hildifrid's mother Hiltrud, cf. *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 11 and 12. Cousinship is likeliest: Hildifrid's name apparently had been made by combining elements from the names of his father and mother, Liutfrid and Hiltrud, to create Hildifrid, cf. Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 172; and if *hilt* stemmed from Hiltrud's family, then Hildrad may have been located on Hiltrud's side of the family, an inference bolstered by the similarity of the second elements of Hildrad's and Hiltrud's names, *rad* and *nud*.

⁵¹ *Genealogia Filiorum Adalrici Ducis*, ed. Christian Wilsdorf, in Wilsdorf, 'Honau', pp. 17–18.

⁵² Wilsdorf, 'Honau', pp. 23–4.

⁵³ Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 116–24; Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 152–63, and Wilsdorf, 'Honau', pp. 16–29.

church of St Michael, which Bishop Benedict and Duke Adalbert built in honour of the archangel Michael and the saints Peter and Paul.⁵⁴

Some of the names appear only in the genealogy, but the careers of those that can be reconstructed from other sources, such as Adala, daughter of Bodal and great-granddaughter of Duke Adalrich, show a persistence of people and places associated with the Etichonids. Bearing the same name as an earlier kinswoman who had been the abbess of St Stephen in Strasburg, the 'nun' Attala appears in 754 as a donor of Alsatian property to Pirmin's monastery at Hornbach in the Bliesgau, northwest of Weissenburg.⁵⁵ This property was located in the villages of Wasselonne and Elberswiller just west of Strasburg, not far from property she owned on the island of Eschau due south of Strasburg where the Ill and Rhine rivers meet. When a monastery was founded in 778 on Eschau by Remigius, bishop of Strasburg (778–83), Adala, now an abbess, and a nun named Roduna, probably Adala's sister, contributed their properties on the island.⁵⁶ The two sisters, according to the Honau genealogy, also donated property to Honau. The abbess Adala appears again five years later in a charter of Hohenburg as the owner of a vineyard in Sigolsheim where Duke Adalrich is known to have held property.⁵⁷ What she was abbess of is unclear. She may have been abbess either of Eschau or Hohenburg, the latter having been governed previously by the Etichonids Odilia and Eugenia.⁵⁸ The charters can support either reading, but it could be that she ruled both abbeys simultaneously or filled both offices sequentially. In any case, the sketchy outlines of this particular woman's career demonstrate the Etichonids' continued involvement with the family foundations that had passed to Carolingian control, and their persisting willingness to contribute estates to new foundations.

MECHANISMS OF CONTINUITY: WEISSENBURG
AND THE RODOINS

Our clearest view of the continuity of property rights in the Vosges region, and of the continuing cooperation between monasteries and their long-standing patrons during the transition to Carolingian overlordship, comes not from the Etichonids, but from a middling kin-group, the Rodoins of the Saargau.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Wilsdorf, 'Honau', p. 18: *Hii omnes dederunt terras suas in variis locis ad ecclesiam sancti Michaelis quam construxit sanctus Benedictus episcopus et Adelbertus dux in honore sancti Michaelis archangeli et sancti Petri et Pauli.*

⁵⁵ Bruckner, *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 174.

⁵⁶ *Urkundenbuch Strassburg* vol. I, no. 16; cf. Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 162.

⁵⁷ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 67. ⁵⁸ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 161–2; *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 302.

⁵⁹ On the Rodoins, see Glöckner, 'Anfänge', pp. 1–46, esp. pp. 18–21; Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 33–40.

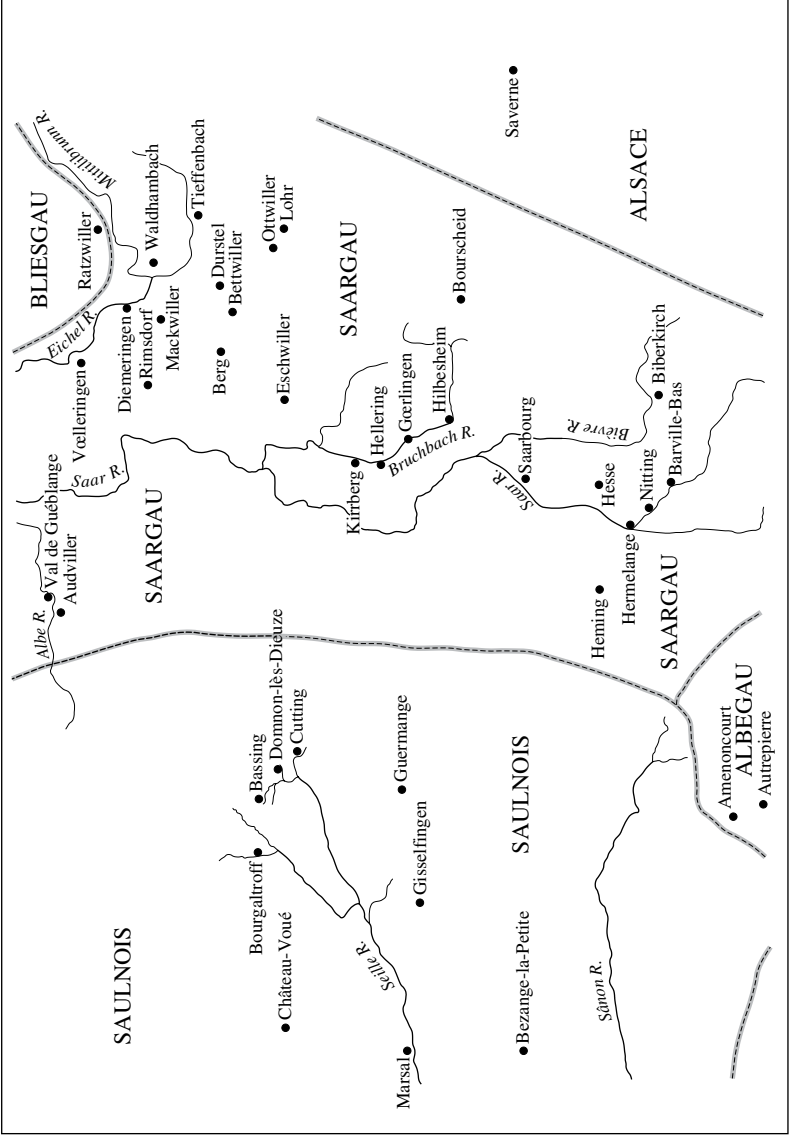
This untitled family perpetuated itself in much the same way as the great families: they cultivated relationships with monks and entrusted their property to monasteries, in their particular case to the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul at Weissenburg. However, the Rodoins do not merely confirm what we have already observed; they are important because they offer a fascinating glimpse into the proprietary mechanisms that regulated the perpetuation of lordship. The Rodoins' experience at Weissenburg demonstrates how families, both great and small, were able to use precarial transactions to maintain control over property long after it had been rolled into a monastic endowment. In this, the Rodoins offer explicit evidence for the mechanisms by which families in other regions have been suspected of consolidating their positions.⁶⁰

According to the Weissenburg charters, the Rodoins' holdings were concentrated in the eastern part of the Saargau in the foothills between the Saar river and the Vosges. The villages around which their farms clustered were located not on the Saar itself, but usually on hilltops or hillsides along tributaries to the Saar, the Albe, Eichel, Mittilbrunn, Bruschbach and Bièvre rivers (see map 4). The distribution of properties suggests the Rodoins were well situated to control the western end of the strategic Saverne Gap and the old Roman road that ran through it from Metz to Strasburg. As a kin-group closely associated with the erstwhile mayoral family of Austrasia, the Wolfoald-Gundoins, they might have been drawn into the political upheavals of the late Merovingian period, but precisely how or in what capacity remains hidden. On the basis of witness lists in the Weissenburg charters, some have assigned the Rodoins to the 'south-Austrasian opposition' to the Carolingians,⁶¹ even going so far as to suggest that their donations were desperate acts to protect themselves from Carolingian hostility.⁶² The patterns to the chronology and distribution of donations, however, do not bear strong witness to a reaction to Pippinid threats. The Wolfoald-Gundoin donors gave a raft of properties between 699 and 713, well after the downfall of Mayor Wolfoald and Duke Gundoin (c. 680) – who in any case were not themselves among the donors to Weissenburg – and well before Pippinid pre-eminence was assured with Charles Martel's victory at Vinchy in 717. The first record of a Rodoin transaction does date to 717, but the charter actually confirms an earlier grant whose date is unknown.⁶³ All we know for

⁶⁰ See Joachim Jahn, 'Tradere ad Sanctum: Politische und gesellschaftliche Aspekte der Traditionspraxis im agilolfingischen Bayern', in Ferdinand Seibt ed., *Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Bosl zum 80. Geburtstag*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1988), vol. I, pp. 400–16; and Wolfgang Hartung, 'Adel, Erbrecht, Schenkung: Die strukturellen Ursachen der frühmittelalterlichen Besitzübertragungen an die Kirche', *ibid.*, pp. 417–38; esp. pp. 424–35.

⁶¹ Ewig, *Trier*, p. 122. ⁶² See Halsall, *Settlement*, p. 14; cf. Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, p. 77.

⁶³ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 196.



Map 4 The estate centres in the Saargau and Saulnois

certain is that the Rodoins were active in the Saargau which formed a mere eddy along the mainstream of history that coursed in the Carolingian period from Metz to the mid-Rhine cities of Speyer, Worms and Mainz, or from the mid-Rhine south to Strasburg and the headwaters of the Danube. In other words, we have little reason to impute to them great political significance.

Had the Rodoins been hostile to Pippin of Herstal or Charles Martel, their antipathy hardly threatened their local prominence. Similar to the Etichonids, the family easily made the transition to Carolingian times. One of their number might have risen briefly to enjoy some Carolingian favour. In 770 we hear of a certain 'illustrious man', Rodoin, operating under Carloman as count at the palace at Brumath in northern Alsace.⁶⁴ The count had come to complain that the forest property in the Ardennes he had received from Carloman's father Pippin had been unjustly seized by royal agents. Rodoin regained his property, but we hear nothing of him again, presumably because he lost favour the next year when Carloman was elbowed out of power by Charlemagne. Whatever Count Rodoin's fate, Charlemagne's assumption of sole rule hardly disrupted the family's activities, which continued unabated.

The Rodoins retained their local position because they cultivated a close relationship with the monks of Weissenburg, whose activities, after Pippin granted the monastery immunity (c. 751–68), effectively came under the protection of the Carolingian kings. The group was not sustained by the prestige of great office holders or royal favour, but by a succession of individuals who began associating themselves with Weissenburg in the late seventh century and continued to do so every generation down to 862. In all, the family transacted twenty-three charters with Weissenburg: twelve donations, nine *precaria*e, three wills, one *prestaria* and the summary of a judgement against the family issued sometime after 788.⁶⁵ The Rodoins probably were one of a cluster of families who founded Weissenburg, a group that included, along with Duke Bonifacius, Bishop Dragobodo of Speyer and the Wolfoald-Gundoins.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 51.

⁶⁵ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 194–200, 204, 224, 227, 232, 247, 251, 254, 257, 262, 267–73; cf. Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 32–3.

⁶⁶ Glöckner, 'Anfänge', pp. 13–20; Franz Staab, 'Episkopat und Kloster: Kirchliche Raumerschließung in den Diözesen Trier, Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Metz, Straßburg und Konstanz im 7. Jahrhundert durch die Abtei Weissenburg', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 42 (1990), pp. 13–56; Franz Staab, 'Noch einmal zur Diplomatik der Weissenburger Traditionen', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 44 (1992), pp. 311–22; Anton Doll, 'Kloster Weissenburg, seine Gründung und deren Zeugen', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 44 (1992), pp. 287–309; and Anton Doll, 'Ist die Diplomatik der Weissenburger Urkunden geklärt?' *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 45

The Rodoins are so called because they stemmed from a certain Rodoin, son of Peter, who bequeathed his properties to Weissenburg in 717. In all likelihood, he was a descendant of the Abbot Rodoin who received a donation to Weissenburg of salt-extraction equipment in the Saulnois from Duke Theotchar in 682.⁶⁷ The close relationship that was forged with Weissenburg is evident in the careers of many family members whose professional activities frequently transgressed the boundaries between the family and the sacred sphere. In addition to being a donor, Rodoin was a prolific notary in the Weissenburg charters, as well as a witness to another eight transactions.⁶⁸ Contemporaneous with him were two other individuals who bore the name Rodoin, one a priest and notary, and the other a monk, both of whom also made donations to Weissenburg.⁶⁹ In the ninth century, a descendant and patron named Lantfrit bore the title *corepiscopus*,⁷⁰ or auxiliary bishop, in the diocese of Metz; and Gebolt, one of the latest Rodoin donors, served as advocate for Weissenburg around 850.⁷¹ Over the course of two centuries, the Rodoin family produced an abbot, at least two notaries (perhaps more),⁷² a priest, a monk, an auxiliary bishop and an advocate, as well as numerous donors and precarists (see table 3).

Weissenburg did not serve merely as an outlet for career ambitions. By entrusting their land to the monastery, the Rodoins were able to stabilize a core of family property in two locations, Berg and Waldhambach, and transmit it from father to son over at least four and perhaps as many as seven generations. In effect, the monastery provided the institutional framework through which the family was able to create an indivisible complex of property and thus establish an enduring foundation for the family's identity and power. In 717, Rodoin, son of Peter, besought the monastery to grant him lifelong use of the two properties.⁷³ Rodoin did not specify when the properties originally had been donated, but the following year he issued his will, and a revision of it, which confirmed and expanded his donation.⁷⁴ Rodoin now clarified that he had donated the property in Waldhambach but revealed that he had not been the first in his family to donate the properties at Berg. According to the

(1993), pp. 439–47. An early connection between Rodoin ancestors and Duke Bonifacius might also explain the repetition of various *Bonifacii* as witnesses in the circle of later charters that surround the Rodoins and Wolfoald-Gundoins, cf. Langenbeck, 'Probleme', p. 32, and p. 36.

⁶⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 213; on the probable relation of Rodoin to Abbot Rodoin, see Glöckner, 'Anfänge', p. 18; and Langenbeck, 'Probleme', p. 33.

⁶⁸ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 115–17.

⁶⁹ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 36, 247; cf. Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 117, 215, 487–8.

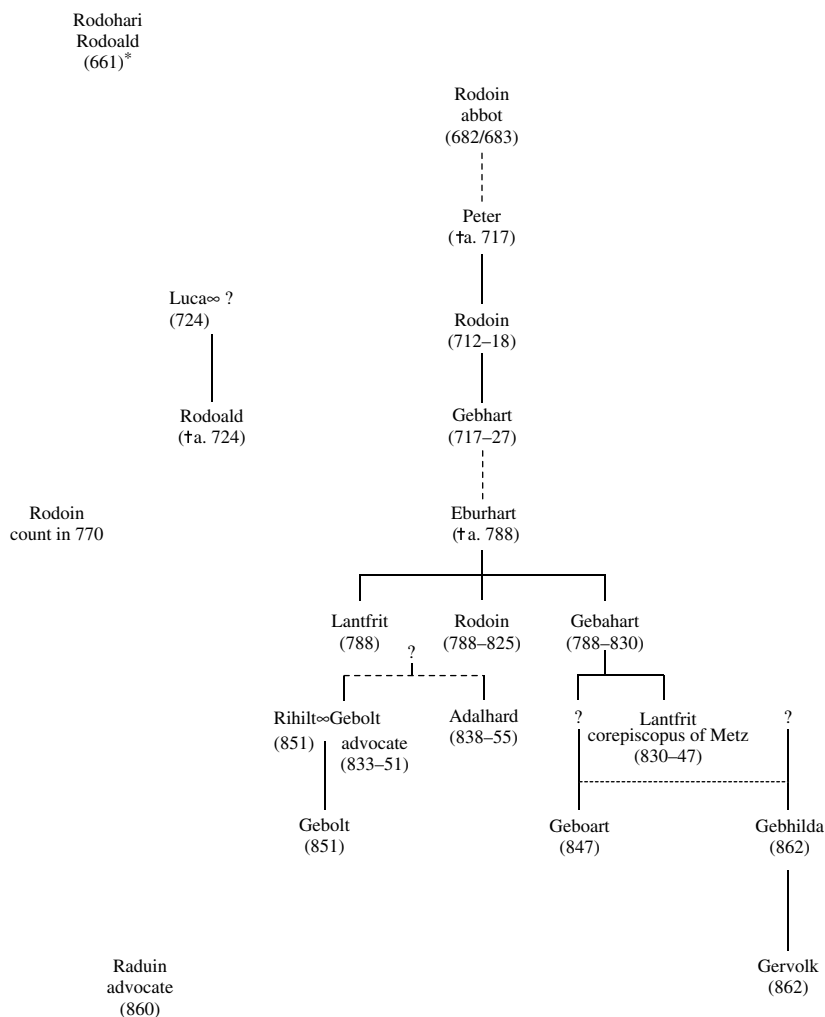
⁷⁰ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 200, 270, 271. ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 198, 251.

⁷² Another person named Rodoin wrote up a charter in 789, *ibid.*, no. 260.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, no. 196. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 227, 194, 224.

Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe

Table 3. *The Rodoins*



*Dates in parentheses indicate when individuals appear in the cartulary of Weissenburg.

will, Rodoin gave the property at Berg ‘which my ancestors and I bestowed to the church of St Martin’, one of Weissenburg’s suffragan churches. Apparently Rodoin’s ‘ancestors’, a term that presumably encompassed his father Peter and at least his grandparents, had donated

these properties and must already have retained them for a couple generations as precarial holdings.⁷⁵

In 726, Rodoin's son Gebhart, a witness to his father's *precaria* of 717, beseeched Weissenburg for the properties in Waldhambach and Berg.⁷⁶ In his *precaria*, Gebhart acknowledged that his father had both donated the property in Waldhambach and confirmed the gift of the properties in Berg. With the help of 'good men', he then made a petition that the monks grant him usufructuary rights. After Gebhart, we lose sight of the properties in Waldhambach and Berg for about a half century until 788, when forest property at Waldhambach and the church at Berg emerged as the bones of contention between the monastery and three of Rodoin's lineal descendants, the brothers Lantfrit, Rodoin and Gebhart.⁷⁷ When two of the brothers made another donation of property in 807 to repair their rift with Weissenburg, the record of the donation reveals that their father, Eburhart, presumably the brother or son of Gebhart, had once held both properties.⁷⁸ Since precarial contracts almost always stipulated lifetime use, we can safely infer that a family member was holding the properties at Waldhambach and Berg as late as 830 when Gebhart made his last recorded donation. Presumably the property then passed to the next generation, probably to the advocate Gebolt, who in 838 donated his share of the Rodoin forest at Waldhambach, perhaps in exchange for precarial rights after the death of Gebhart.⁷⁹ In sum, the family had held the properties at Berg and Waldhambach from the monastery for up to a century and a half.

THE RODOINS AND WOLFOALD-GUNDOINS:
A PRECARIAL KIN-GROUP

The Weissenburg charters preserve not simply the outlines of a Rodoin lineage: they also bear traces of a broader group that included the Wolfoald-Gundoin. This latter group's activities as patrons, similar to the Pippinids and to Sadalberga's family, were spearheaded by a woman, in this case, Wolfgunda, the daughter of Mayor Wolfoald and spouse to Duke Gundoin.⁸⁰ She was joined in her efforts by her two sons, Ermbert, a priest, and Otto, a count. Otto's son Werald, a monk, a daughter Amita, and Amita's son Radulf also conducted transactions with Weissenburg (see table 1 above).⁸¹ Ermbert and his nephew Werald accounted for most of the group's recorded interaction with the monastery, appearing as

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 194, 224, 227; cf. Langenbeck on Rodoin's *antecessores*, 'Probleme', p. 38.

⁷⁶ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 257. ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 197. ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 199. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 273.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 228, 229. ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 37, 205, 223, 252, 218, 239, 225, 226, 240.

principal actors in fourteen charters,⁸² and as prominent witnesses in fifteen others.⁸³ Yet even here Wolfgunda was the dominant figure, having approved a massive donation made in 699 by the two sons.⁸⁴

The Wolfoald-Gundoins vanished from history sometime after 737, the year Werald and his nephew Radulf made the family's last recorded donations.⁸⁵ Although the Wolfoald-Gundoins technically died out, their close association with Weissenburg ensured that they would live on in the memory of the Rodoins. Monastic institutions enabled families not only to pass on their own property, but also to claim properties donated by associated families in the past. If we compare the location of Wolfoald-Gundoin transactions made with Weissenburg in the early eighth century with the location of those made by both the Rodoins of the early eighth century and the later Rodoins of the ninth century, an intriguing pattern emerges. We notice that the interests of the Rodoin and Wolfoald-Gundoin families overlap at Waldhambach, Tieffenbach and Ottwiller along the Eichel river, Audviller and Val de Guéblange along the Albe river, and Barville-Bas, Hesse and Biberkirch along the Bièvre and upper Saar rivers. If we group the transactions chronologically, and compare the location of the properties held by Wolfoald-Gundoins and Rodoins in the early eighth century with those held by the Rodoins in the ninth century, we detect a continual interest in Waldhambach, Berg, Durstel, Ottwiller, Audviller, Biberkirch, Barville-Bas and Hesse. If we then subtract the properties of the early Rodoins, we discover that at four of the locales, Ottwiller, Audviller, Biberkirch and Hesse, continuity in the location of properties runs directly from the Wolfoald-Gundoins to the later Rodoins (see table 4).

In addition, we notice that names found among the Wolfoald-Gundoins and the early Rodoins persisted among the later Rodoins. While names alone may be unreliable 'vectors of memory',⁸⁶ when combined with other evidence they can be suggestive. The names of two later Rodoins, the advocate Gebolt and his brother Adalhard, evoke associations with the Wolfoald-Gundoins and the early Rodoins. Gebolt's name, variously spelled *Gebolt*, *Geboold* and *Gebohold* in the charters,⁸⁷ is linguistically identical with the name for the *villa Geboaldo*, known today as le Val de Guéblange, where Wolfoald-Gundoins and early Rodoins made donations in the early eighth century.⁸⁸ Adalhard,

⁸² *Ibid.*, Werald: nos. 192, 231, 233, 241–243, 256; Ermbert: nos. 205, 223, 252, 226, 218, 239, 240.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Werald: nos. 202, 218, 239, 225, 223, 205, 252, 232, 240, 262; Ermbert: nos. 228, 229, 234, 235, 237.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 223, 205, 252. ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 37, 241. ⁸⁶ Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 52–4.

⁸⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 204, 268, 269.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 225, 231, 232, 233; cf. Langenbeck, 'Probleme', p. 32.

Conquest and continuity

Table 4. *The continuity of Rodoin and Wolfoald-Gundoin properties*

		LOCATION OF PROPERTY										
		Waldhambach	Berg	Durstel	Ratzwiller	Ottwiller	Audviller	Val de Guéblange	Biberkirch	Barville-Bas	Hesse	Tieffenbach
DONORS and PRECARISTS	↑ Rodoins	Gervolk (862)			X							
		Gebolt (833–51)	X		X							
		Adalhard (838–55)			X							
		Geboart (846)								X	X	
		Lantfrit (830–47)				X	X		X	X	X	
		Gebahart (788–830)	X	X	X				X			
		Rodoin (788–825)	X	X								
		Lantfrit (788)	X	X								
		Eburhart (a.788)	X	X								
		Gebhart (717–27)	X	X								
		Luca (724)	X									
		Rodoin (712–18)	X	X	X			X		X		X
		Ct. Adalhard (720–1)							X			
		Amita (712)					X	X				
	Werald (699–737)	X				X	X	X			X	
	Ermbert (699–715)							X		X		
	Wolfgunda (699–706)					X		X				
	↓ Wolfold-Gundoins											

who made a donation with Gebolt in 847, bears the same name as a certain Count Adalhard who in 720 received from Weissenburg precarial property at Biberkirch.⁸⁹ This property was part of a larger complex of estates in the Saargau, Albegau, Saulnois and Chaumontois which had been

⁸⁹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 267.

donated to Weissenburg twenty-one years earlier by the Wolfoald-Gundoins Ermbert and Count Otto.⁹⁰ *Precariae* could be awarded to individuals unrelated to the original donor, but such impersonal grants were less common, because families continued to hold on to properties they had donated.⁹¹ Suggestive also is Count Adalhard's appearance as the prominent first witness to a transaction made by Otto's son Werald.⁹² Count Adalhard probably was related in some way to Ermbert and Count Otto, and presumably the heir to the family's countship and properties.

On the other hand, the name Adalhard is unprecedented in the kin-group. That, in addition to the fact that the count had to pay a *census* for the *precaria*, suggests – as we shall fully explain in the [next chapter](#) – a collateral, rather than lineal, relationship.⁹³ Be that as it may, assigning Adalhard to the Wolfoald-Gundoins is not essential; more important for the present discussion is that a later Rodoin might have been given the name Adalhard precisely because the earlier Count Adalhard once had held Wolfoald-Gundoin property. It may be significant that the record of Count Adalhard's *precaria* of 720 was entered into the cartulary immediately before Gebolt and Adalhard's donation of 846. The insertion of the *precaria* before the charter of the later Adalhard hints at some connection. It is also striking that Count Adalhard's *precaria* had granted him the properties at Biberkirch where the later Rodoins, Gebahart and his son Lantfrit, also made a donation in 830. Had Adalhard's *precaria* been included in the cartulary because it provided background information to that portion of a Wolfoald-Gundoin donation that eventually came under Rodoin control in the ninth century?

It would seem so: Count Adalhard only received the Biberkirch portion of Ermbert and Otto's donation of 699, a donation that had included properties farther to the west in the Saulnois and Chaumontois. Otto's charter was preserved in the cartulary in three copies and, similar to Count Adalhard's *precaria*, was inserted into the codex next to charters of the Rodoin family. It appears first as no. 205, immediately after Gebolt's conditional gift of 851; again as no. 223, just before the second version of Rodoin's will of 718; and finally as no. 252, just after a second copy of a donation/*precaria* made by Gebahart and Lantfrit in 830, a transaction that included among other things properties at Biberkirch. As charter 252, it also preceded by two a second copy of Gebolt's conditional gift of 851 (no. 254). Finally, Count Adalhard's *precaria* was, as we have noted, followed by Gebolt and Adalhart's donation and *precaria*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 223, 205, 252. ⁹¹ Wood, 'Teutsind', pp. 44–7. ⁹² Cf. *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 243.

⁹³ See below, chapter 3, p. 85.

(nos. 268 and 269), but also by the donation and *precaria* of Lantfrit and his nephew Geboart in 846 (nos. 270 and 271).

The best guess is that the monks were preoccupied with properties of the Saargau, in particular with the complex of estates in the southern regions of the district around Biberkirch and the neighbouring villages of Barville-Bas and Hesse, because these properties were important to the later Rodoins who were still active in the area when the cartulary was compiled. When one considers the rarity of the name 'Adalhard' among the Rodoins, and that Count Adalhard's *precaria* of 720 was situated in the cartulary immediately before Gebolt and Adalhard's donation of 846, it may be that the name of the later Adalhard, like Gebolt's, was bestowed to associate offspring either with long-standing family properties or with properties of associated groups which eventually came, by way of *precariae*, under the control of another family. Fortunately, we can hazard more than an educated guess. Two pieces of evidence prove that Wolfoald-Gundoin properties eventually ended up in the hands of later Rodoins: in 830, Lantfrit and Gebahart donated some properties around Durstel, just south of Waldhambach. They then made a *precaria* for life-long use of the properties as well as a request for properties near Biberkirch. The charter identifies this property as the *uile nuncupante Wolfgunda*, the 'estate named Wolfgunda', who was the mother of Ermbert and Count Otto.⁹⁴ Then, in 847, Lantfrit donated properties in villages near the church of Saints Martin and Peter at Hermelange (near Biberkirch), as well as properties to the north around Ottwiller.⁹⁵ Lantfrit made the gift on the condition that he retain the properties in lifetime usufruct, and that he also enjoy use of the church at Biberkirch as well as the *Ueraldo cella*, 'the cell of Werald', Wolfgunda's grandson and erstwhile monk of Weissenburg.

In sum, the Rodoin and Wolfoald-Gundoin activities preserved in the Weissenburg codex reveal the precarial mechanisms by which families and monasteries were able to create local networks and maintain them during, and well after, the transition to Carolingian overlordship. Moreover, they attest to the flexibility of monastic institutions which allowed kin-groups to draw upon the memory, as well as the property, of a wider circle of associates, and thus to manufacture a larger group consciousness that exceeded the narrower boundaries of kinship. Whether the Rodoins, the Wolfoald-Gundoins or the Etichonids were antagonistic to the Carolingians is less important than the resilient late-Merovingian local order they helped to create.

⁹⁴ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 198, 251 and n. 1, p. 409; compare with no. 51, which locates Wolfgunda's estate on the Bièvre river.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 200.

THE CAROLINGIANS AND ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY

Monasteries were not passive repositories of family property. As the self-styled 'houses of God' – organized according to a Rule, administered by a system of internal governance and set off by rites of passage which reminded members of their primary obedience to God and His representative, the abbot – they possessed a strong sense of their own institutional rights and responsibilities. Although patrons and monasteries usually cooperated with one another, relations could become disharmonious when perceptions of their respective obligations clashed. This tension was not induced by lay rapaciousness, clerical greed, the monks' fears of secular contamination or any other well-worn stereotypes of lay and ecclesiastical animosity. Such charges and complaints only emerged as major issues in the late tenth century. The source of the tension in the late eighth century rather was traceable to the place of monasteries in the Carolingian social and political order.

That ecclesiastical institutions constituted a crucial pillar of Carolingian power has long been recognized. Still to be explored is the precise relationship between the rise of the Carolingians, the Carolingians' use of ecclesiastical wealth, their consolidation of royal power in the eighth century and the effect of all these things on the networks of lordship tethered to monastic endowments. Although Carolingian lords generally respected the property rights of ecclesiastical institutions, and by extension those of patron families, they were quick to help themselves to the landed wealth accumulating in monasteries. During his rise to power, Charles Martel is alleged to have secularized ecclesiastical property by seizing it from abbots and bishops and granting it to his supporters.¹ While ninth-century monks did accuse him of rapaciousness, contemporary sources have almost

¹ Heinrich Brunner, 'Die Landeschenkungen der Merowinger und der Agilofinger', in Brunner, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des deutschen und französischen Rechtes: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (1894; reprint: Aalen, 1969), pp. 1–39; Alain Bondroit, 'Les "precaire verbo regis" avant le concile de Leptinnes

nothing to say about the alienation of God's property to secular people.² More recent assessments have concluded either that later Carolingian clerics manufactured a fictional Charles the rapacious to remind the west Frankish king, Charles the Bald, of his responsibility to protect church property,³ or that Charles Martel's successors actually were more responsible for secularizations,⁴ or that while Charles probably did confiscate or alienate some church property, albeit in restricted circumstances, his behaviour was elaborated into a more general, sinister policy by later writers.⁵

It seems clear enough that Charles Martel and his successors made use of church property as they consolidated their authority, but the term 'secularization' is misleading. We can perhaps assess the early Carolingians' behaviour more fruitfully if we interpret their actions within the context of the lordships that had been evolving since the seventh century. Charles Martel's Pippinid ancestors had founded and patronized monasteries and, if the behaviour of kin-groups in the Vosges region is a reliable indicator, continued to gain access to the wealth entrusted to monks through precarial grants. When they became the masters of central authority, early Carolingian rulers instinctively combined these practices with their regnant prerogatives. As they extended their protection, immunities and privileges to monasteries, they expected monks to reciprocate with support. In other words, monks were expected to let early Carolingian lords borrow church property during moments of crisis and grant it out to the rulers' retainers in *precaria*. Circumstantial evidence suggests that these practices began under Charles Martel, although firm evidence survives only from the tenures of his sons.⁶ At the Council of Estinnes in 743/4 Carloman decreed that:

because of imminent wars and hostile actions. . . we shall with the indulgence of God reserve for a period of time a portion of ecclesiastical property under *precaria* and *census* [i.e. rent]. . . and again, if necessity requires, that the *princeps* order it, let

(a. 743)', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 1 (1900), pt 1: 'Leur existence et leur signification juridique', pp. 41–60; and pt 2: 'L'existence du "précaire verbo regis"', pp. 249–66. See more recently, Riché, *The Carolingians*, pp. 36–9.

² Ulrich Nonn, 'Das Bild Karl Martells in den lateinischen Quellen vornehmlich des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 4 (1970), pp. 70–137; and 'Das Bild Karl Martells in mittelalterlichen Quellen', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 9–21; Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Karl Martell und die Heiligen: Kirchenpolitik und Maiordomat im Spiegel der spätmérowingischen Hagiographie', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 101–18; Alain Dierkens, 'Carolus monasteriorum multorum eversor et ecclesiasticarum pecuniarum in usus proprios commutator? Notes sur la politique monastique du maire du palais Charles Martel', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 277–94; and Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, pp. 122–6, 134–7.

³ Nonn, 'Das Bild Karl Martells in mittelalterlichen Quellen', pp. 15–16.

⁴ Patrick J. Geary, 'Die Provence zur Zeit Karl Martells', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 381–92.

⁵ Wood, 'Teutsind', pp. 31–5.

⁶ Alain Bondroit, 'Les "precaire verbo regis" avant le concile de Leptinnes (a. 743)', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 1 (1900), pt 3: 'Légalité et importance juridique du "précaire verbo regis"', pp. 430–47.

the *precaria* be renewed and rewritten anew. And let it be observed by all, that a church or a monastery, whose property should be granted in *precaria*, not suffer penury and poverty, but, if poverty compels, let the whole possession be returned to the church and the house of God.⁷

The decree makes it clear that ecclesiastical properties were not secularized, at least not by design. They were loaned out on a temporary basis to precarial holders who were supposed to pay rent for using it. In this sense, the prescription at Estinnes was a brilliant extension of methods already in use elsewhere as nobles built up regional lordships. As we have seen in the [previous chapter](#), properties donated to Murbach by the Etichonid count Eberhard were quickly granted back to Hildifrid and Hildrad, both of whom were closely associated with the count, the one a nephew, the other probably an affine. These transactions have long been seen as crucial evidence for alleged secularizations during the time of Charles Martel or for the early development of vassalage.⁸ While there may be some justification for these interpretations of Eberhard's charters, Eberhard and the monks of Murbach were operating within by then well-established patterns of lordship and alliance-building in Alsace.

On a much smaller scale, their activities anticipated the provisions laid down at Estinnes. Eberhard had founded the monastery with Pirmin shortly before 728⁹ and was still very much alive when the *precariae* to his kinsmen Hildifrid and Hildrad were made.¹⁰ Presumably, he would have had a say in Murbach's dispensation of his bequests. Indeed, Eberhard's last charter to Murbach (735/7), which designated the monastery as his legal heir when he retired childless from worldly affairs, coincides with the two massive precarial grants to Hildifrid and Hildrad.¹¹ It is difficult to avoid the conclusion, especially when we gloss it with the Rodoins' concurrent activities in the Saargau, that these family properties, originally donated to Murbach by Eberhard, had now been passed by *precaria* to another generation of Etichonids. That is, five to seven years before Carolingian lords appear in the sources diverting ecclesiastical *precariae* to their own purposes at Estinnes, *precariae*

⁷ *Concilia aevi Karolini*, ed. Albert Werminghoff, 2 vols., *MGH Legum Sectio 3: Concilia* vol. II, pts 1–2 (Hanover, Leipzig, 1906–8), vol. I: no. 2, c. 2, p. 7.

⁸ Ganshof, *Feudalism*, p. 12; Herwig Wolfram, 'Karl Martell und das fränkische Lehenwesen: Aufnahme eines Nichtbestandes', in Jarnut et al. eds., *Karl Martell*, pp. 61–79, esp. p. 62; Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reconsidered* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 75–105, esp. pp. 84, 95; and Wood, 'Teutsind', p. 47.

⁹ François Himly, 'Recherches récentes sur les origines de l'abbaye de Murbach', *Revue d'Alsace* 88 (1948), pp. 191–6, esp. pp. 193–5.

¹⁰ Eberhard died in 747. *Annales Alamannici*, *Annales Guelpherbytani*, and *Annales Nazariani*, in Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik*, a. 747, pp. 152–3.

¹¹ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 127.

were being used by a member of the titled nobility to perpetuate his family's lordship.

Had the Carolingians learned these techniques from close observation of the Alsatian scene? This is impossible to say for certain. As we have seen, the first two abbots of Murbach, Pirmin and Romanus, were during this time on friendly terms with Charles Martel and Bishop Heddo of Strasburg. Bishop Heddo participated in the circle of Bonifacian reformers who conducted their activities with the encouragement of Carolingian patrons. Presumably, figures such as Heddo, who appeared at Boniface and Carloman's *Concilium Germanicum* in 742, would have advised Charles Martel's sons on any provisions for the use of church property at Estinnes, which in effect was an adjustment of the council of 742.¹² On the other hand, we have good reason to assume that the Carolingians themselves, by virtue of their intimate association with family foundations, would have been aware of similar practices elsewhere. In the end, the more important point is that the provisions of Estinnes were predicated on local practices which were readily adaptable to the needs of Carolingian rulers.

This pragmatic method of borrowing ecclesiastical property at Estinnes was developed into a regular option for funding royal supporters by the time of Charlemagne's reign. At the assembly at Herstal in 779, Charlemagne distinguished the ecclesiastical *precaria* that churches and monasteries might grant out on their own from the *precaria verbo regis*, or 'precaria granted out at the word of the king'. As at Estinnes, the capitulary spelled out the obligations and rents owed by the holders to the churches, but absent at Herstal is any sense that this was an emergency measure. While Charles Martel's alleged confiscations of ecclesiastical property and Carloman's prescriptions of 743 once were held up as evidence for the imposition of feudalism from above, they are more properly to be seen as the outgrowth of a local practice which was developed into the more systematic *precaria verbo regis* at Herstal.¹³

Ecclesiastical institutions did run the risk of losing control of property granted out in *precaria verbo regis*, as clerical complaints about loss seem to reveal, but such grievances arose only later, after problems in the system began to appear. In the early eighth century, meanwhile, the *precaria verbo regis* seemed to be a painless way for Carolingian rulers both to endow supporters and to respect ecclesiastical rights. Monks had been sharing property with their patrons; why should they not do the same for their

¹² Cf. Thomas F. X. Noble, 'Introduction', *The Letters of St. Boniface*, trans. Ephraim Emerton (New York, 2000), pp. vii–xxxv, esp. pp. xx–xxiv.

¹³ Wolfram, 'Karl Martell und das fränkische Lehenswesen', pp. 76–7.

new, more powerful Carolingian benefactors? Let us now examine more carefully this peculiar Carolingian innovation so that we might understand a crucial mechanism by which local patterns of power were reconciled to the political centre.

THE STANDARDIZATION OF *PRECARIAE* AT HERSTAL

It has long been assumed that the provisions for *precariae* in the capitulary of Herstal, by virtue of their kinship with the provisions decreed at Estinnes, were intended to legislate only the terms of royal *precariae*.¹⁴ An essential difference between Estinnes and Herstal, as we have seen, is considered to be the ad hoc nature of the former and the routinization of the latter. However, a literal reading of the text indicates that the capitulary of Herstal, by contrast with the prescriptions of Estinnes, was pitched broadly to set terms for all *precariae*, royal as well as ecclesiastical. That is, in addition to differences in the intended regularity of the *precaria verbo regis*, the intended scope of the legislation at Herstal with respect to both types of *precaria* was much more ambitious. In effect, the capitular decree represented an effort to standardize, and mediate, a range of precarial practices, each of which ultimately was important to the imperatives of central power.

According to the capitulary of Herstal, Charlemagne distinguished *precariae* bearing a *census* from those lacking one, and decreed that all precarists were expected to pay a *census*, as well as a *decima*, and a *nona*, i.e. a tenth and a ninth, or one-fifth of the productive capacity of the lands. These pronouncements appear in two versions of the capitulary, in section thirteen of the *forma communis*, or general form, and in section fourteen of the *forma langobardica*, or Lombardic form. The *forma langobardica* places more emphasis on the *precaria verbo regis* and may have been composed later, perhaps in the late ninth century,¹⁵ although it may be roughly concurrent with the general form.¹⁶ One suspects that the existence of the Italian form may be responsible for the general assumption that the *forma communis* was chiefly concerned with *precariae verbo regis*. In the *forma communis*, Charlemagne decreed that:

Concerning ecclesiastical properties, from which *census* are now due, a *decima* and a *nona* is to be paid with that *census*; and [concerning the ecclesiastical properties]

¹⁴ Ganshof, *Feudalism*, p. 18; Giles Constable, 'Nona et Decima: An Aspect of Carolingian Economy', *Speculum* 35 (1960), pp. 224–50, esp. p. 227.

¹⁵ François Louis Ganshof, *Recherches sur les capitulaires* (Paris, 1958), p. 17.

¹⁶ Catherine Boyd, *Tithes and Parishes in Medieval Italy: The Historical Roots of a Modern Problem* (Ithaca, 1952), pp. 39–40.

The Carolingians and ecclesiastical property

from which [*census*] before were not due, likewise the *decima* and *nona* is to be given, as well as [a *census* of] one *solidus* for fifty farmhouses, a half *solidus* for thirty farmhouses and a third [of a] *solidus* for twenty farmhouses.¹⁷

In other words, by 779 precarists were required to pay the *decima* and *nona* on any *precaria*, and a *census* could be assessed retroactively on a heretofore unburdened *precaria*. Apparently, precarists who had not been paying a *census* felt that they should have to yield neither a *census* nor the *decima* and *nona*, hence the need for the king to clarify matters. The decree also implies that the assessment of a *census* was more frequent by 779 than it previously had been, since the switch from the present to the past tense, from ‘whence *census* now are due’ (*unde nunc census exeunt*) to ‘whence before were not due’ (*unde antea non exierunt*), suggests that the *census* had become more common and that the right to hold a *precaria* without a *census* had become dated, or at least rarer, requiring special attention.

Charlemagne then distinguished oral from written *precariae* and recommended that ‘they be renewed, and where they do not exist, let them be written down’. At the end of the paragraph, he advised that ‘the *precariae* made by our word should be distinguished from those which are made willingly and voluntarily from the property of the churches’. Thus, the capitulary confronted three issues: the payment of a *census*, a *nona* and a *decima* for any *precaria*, the documentation of all precarial transactions, and then the distinction between ecclesiastical *precariae* and *precariae verbo regis*.

On the face of it, the reasons for requiring documentation of *precariae* at Herstal are easy enough to decipher: written evidence was a valued form of proof in resolving property claims. We need only recall the abbot of Honau’s request that Charlemagne’s father confirm charters that had become lost. If the king were going to be drawn into such problems, it perhaps was inevitable that his intervention would be expressed as a general directive. The king had additional reasons to want monasteries to keep track of property: because some of this land was being granted out to his retainers in *precaria verbo regis*, he had an obvious self-interest in having monasteries record their available wealth. Moreover, since monasteries and their extensive network of patrons offered a means through which a ruler could extend and mobilize his authority, he had an interest in encouraging the administrative capacity of monasteries.

¹⁷ *Capitularia* vol. I, no. 20, c. 13, p. 50.

THE CAROLINGIANS AND THE *BREVIUM EXEMPLA*

It might not be surprising, then, that sometime between 800 and 817 either Charlemagne or his son Louis the Pious issued a directive, the so-called *Brevium Exempla ad Describendas Res Ecclesiasticas et Fiscales*, which provided models for making inventories of ecclesiastical and fiscal property. The capitulary consists of three parts, the first and third of which deal with the documentation of episcopal and royal estates, while the second deals with monastic property granted out in *precaria* or benefice.¹⁸ The two estate inventories have received the lion's share of attention mainly because they have excited the interest of constitutional and economic historians.¹⁹ For those interested in the interplay of local organization and the exercise of central authority, the second section on *precaria* and benefices is much more revealing. Derived from Weissenburg, this section is comprised of two paradigmatic lists: one which deals with 'clerics and laymen who have given property to Weissenburg and received them back in usufruct', i.e. *precaria*; and the other with 'beneficiaries who hold benefices from the same monastery'. The entries are brief and record only the essentials: the name of the donor/*precarist* or beneficiary, and the location, types and productivity of the loaned property. At the end of each list follows a royal injunction which advises that recipients of the capitulary 'should write down other [properties] in the same way'.

Weissenburg's method of recording *precarial* properties and benefices might have come to the notice of the royal court through Bernhar, abbot of Weissenburg (811–26), bishop of Worms (803–26) and kinsman to Charlemagne himself.²⁰ In the years surrounding the putative date of the *Brevium Exempla*, Bernhar had dedicated himself to issues of ecclesiastical reform. Charlemagne reportedly sent him in 809 to Rome to present to Pope Leo the conclusions reached that same year about theological questions at the Council of Aachen.²¹ As a knowledgeable emissary, Bernhar presumably had participated in the Council of Aachen, which

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 128, pp. 250–6.

¹⁹ Karl Verhein, 'Studien zu den Quellen zum Reichsgut der Karolingerzeit II', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 11 (1954/5), pp. 333–92; Wolfgang Metz, *Das Karolingische Reichsgut* (Berlin, 1960); Wolfgang Metz, *Zur Erforschung des karolingischen Reichsgutes* (Darmstadt, 1971), pp. 23–8; Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung* vol. I, pp. 75–101.

²⁰ Josef Semmler, 'Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Abtei Weißenburg: "Regula mixta", pirminische und anianische Reform', *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 24 (1957), pp. 1–17, esp. pp. 10–11; and Meinrad Schaab, 'Die Diözese Worms im Mittelalter', *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv* 86 (1966), pp. 94–219, esp. pp. 199–200.

²¹ Harald Willjung ed., *Das Konzil von Aachen 809, MGH Legum Sectio 4: Concilia* 2, supplement 2 (Hanover, 1998), pp. 20–9, 88–90, 287–94.

also examined the state of the churches, 'but nothing was settled it seems because of the magnitude of the issues'.²² He also is known to have attended the Council of Mainz in 813, which took up the issues of ecclesiastical reform abandoned at Aachen. By whatever route the example of Weissenburg had come to the attention of the emperor, the *Brevium Exempla* reveals both the techniques Weissenburg had been using to keep track of the people holding monastic property and the methods by which Carolingian kings co-opted local practices and then cast them more widely as they centralized their rule. They also point to a royal interest in precarial properties at a time when Charlemagne was helping himself to monastic wealth and awarding it to his followers on a more regular basis.

The similarity of the *Brevium Exempla* to polyptychs, the great ecclesiastical estate surveys of the ninth century, has long been emphasized. Alfons Dopsch did distinguish the second part on *precaria*e and benefices from the other two sections; and Klaus Verhein pointed out the resemblance of the second part to cartularies rather than to polyptychs, although he attempted to harmonize the differences between the form of the second part and polyptychs by surmising that *precaria*e and benefices were awarded from the fund of property summarized in polyptychs.²³ Nonetheless, both Dopsch and Verhein leave the impression that the second portion, on account of its juxtaposition with the first and the third, generally resembles polyptychs and can be understood as part of a larger programme of administrator-kings to have monasteries organize themselves according to the dictates of Anianian monastic reform.

The resemblance to polyptychs can only be pushed so far. Polyptychs generally record the aggregate figures of properties held by a monastery in particular villages, or properties directly exploited by a monastery and its dependent labourers. While this might apply to the two estate inventories, the Weissenburg lists are focused on people, not things. They speak of properties held by individual lay patrons, of the precarial relationships that bound monks and patrons to one another. Moreover, the injunction at the end of each list betrays a royal interest not simply in property that might be granted out as *precaria*e *verbo regis*, but more broadly – in the spirit of Herstal – in the documentation of ecclesiastical *precaria*e and benefices. In short, the second section of the *Brevium Exempla* brings into focus a crucial aspect of Carolingian centralization: political order was fashioned in part by the cultivation of interlocking networks of kings, magnates and

²² ARF, a. 809, p. 129.

²³ Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. I, p. 75; Verhein, 'Studien', pp. 384–5.

monks which were formalized within an institutional framework provided by monasteries and churches.

THE PROLIFERATION OF THE PRECARIAL CENSUS

The Carolingian decrees at Herstal and in the *Brevium Exempla* naturally depict a society as the Carolingians wanted their subjects to see it: one that was well-ordered and receptive to royal supervision. It would nonetheless be a mistake to belittle this 'legislation' as a mere legal fiction, unconnected to the actual operation of power 'on the ground'. The decrees at Herstal on precarial rents coincided closely with the stunning transformation of precarial practices nearly everywhere.

Few things sound more natural to modern Western ears than the payment of rent in return for the use of property. As strange as it may seem, before the last quarter of the eighth century monasteries rarely extracted rent from *precariae*. When they did, monks tended to require rents from people whose claims by virtue of kinship with the original donor were either attenuated or non-existent. At about the same time that Charlemagne issued his recommendations on precarial rent at Herstal, many monasteries began to demand rents from their precarists and to require that even those individuals who requested use of their own donations pay rent. The coincidence of royal legislation and changes in local practices suggests that Charlemagne's centralizing efforts had induced a more stratified local order. Although the types and fluctuations of precarial levies have been well studied, at least for the eastern regions during the high Carolingian period when the indiscriminate *census* was already established,²⁴ and broad changes in the amounts and varieties of *census* between the ninth and eleventh centuries have been well researched,²⁵ overlooked has been the transformation of the precarial *census* in the course of the eighth century. This profound revision in the relationship between monasteries and their patrons is striking, and the implications for understanding the processes of royal power in the early medieval period are instructive.

²⁴ Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. II, pp. 252–88, esp. 268–71; Lütge, *Agrarverfassung*, pp. 228–9; Ludolf Kuchenbuch, *Bäuerliche Gesellschaft und Klosterherrschaft im 9. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Sozialstruktur der Familia der Abtei Prüm*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 66 (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 146–79.

²⁵ Christoph Dette, 'Die Grundherrschaft Weißenburg im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert im Spiegel ihrer Herrenhöfe', in Werner Rösener ed., *Strukturen der Grundherrschaft im frühen Mittelalter*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck Instituts für Geschichte 92 (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 194–6; and Werner Rösener, *Grundherrschaft im Wandel: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung geistlicher Grundherrschaften im südwestdeutschen Raum vom 9. bis 14. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck Instituts für Geschichte 92 (Göttingen, 1991), pp. 143–4.

The Carolingians and ecclesiastical property

The evidence of the charters

The charters in the cartulary of Weissenburg reveal that whereas the monastery rarely attached financial burdens to properties granted out before the 780s, after 786 – i.e. shortly after Herstal – the monks began requiring payment of a *census* for the use of all *precariae* and conditional gifts. Of the seventeen *precariae* and conditional gifts before 786,²⁶ only four mention a *census* in return for right of usufruct. For reasons that we shall discuss in the [next chapter](#), the *census* in two instances looks suspicious and can be set aside for the moment.²⁷ The two charters prior to 785 that unquestionably spell out a precarial *census* date to 720 and 745. The latter specified a rent only if the donor Odalhart should produce a legitimate son, and if they – Odalhart and the son – should wish to hold the property from the monastery jointly. The charter assumes that as long as Odalhart alone held the property, he would not be required to pay a *census*.²⁸ The former deals with Count Adalhart's request for property donated to Weissenburg twenty-five years before by the two Wolfoald-Gundoins, Ermbert and Otto.²⁹ As we have seen in the [previous chapter](#), Adalhart either was closely allied to the Wolfoald-Gundoins or related to them, perhaps collaterally. Thus, Adalhart may have requested property donated either by people with whom he was associated by friendship or by relatives outside his primary kin-group. In such cases, the monastery apparently felt entitled to assess a *census* because the precarist's claims to the property were weaker and the monastery's correspondingly stronger.

The transactions after 786 present the opposite pattern: only two of thirty-five *precariae* and conditional gifts failed to specify a *census*.³⁰ One cannot be dated with certainty and might actually belong to the period around 786.³¹ The other dates to 851 and probably represents a favour to the monastery's advocate, Gebolt, and his immediate family. Gebolt's was

²⁶ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 8, 47, 136, 137, 148, 192, 195, 196, 202, 214, 221, 226, 229, 233, 256, 257, 264, 267.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 256, 264, pp. 496–7, 507.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 136: 'in ea uero ratione, ut dum aduixero, habere debeam, et si mihi dominus ex legitima muliere et amabile filium dederit, tam ego ipse uel filius meus hoc habe[re] debeamus, in ea ratione, ut annis singulis donamus in argento uel in reliquo pretio ad ipsum monasterium uel ad ipsos monachos ad festiuitatem natalis domini nostri Iesu Christi denarios IIII. Et si mihi ante ea aliquid contingit, ut mihi dominus heredem dederit, ipsas res supranominatas habeat in censum.'

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 267.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 19, 20, 48, 49, 50, 77, 78, 79, 83, 99, 101, 115, 151, 152, 156, 167, 172, 173, 176, 180, 182, 197, 198, 199, 200, 204, 254, 206, 208, 214, 216, 249, 255, 258, 269, 271.

³¹ The editors date it to around 810 but concede the charter could have been written up to twenty years earlier, *ibid.*, no. 48.

considered an exception, because a copyist scribbled a provision in the lower margin of the codex which stipulated that 'he who then holds this property' – i.e. after Gebolt, his wife and son – 'should pay two *solidi* to the monastery every year'.³²

Thus, of the *precariae* and conditional gifts transacted at Weissenburg before 786, all but two were unburdened, and of the thirty-six after 786, all, with the exception of one, which might date to around 786, stipulate in one way or another a *census*. Indeed, the sudden proliferation of the precarial *census* at Weissenburg can be pinpointed to 786: in November 785 the couple Hiltibert and Thiatburg made a conditional gift for which no financial burdens were levied;³³ but by spring 786 two separate conditional gifts made by a Helidmund and a Rading bear a *census*.³⁴

As the monks of Weissenburg transformed the precarial *census* into a systematic levy, they also began to regularize the methods and times for payment. Before 786, *census* were collected variously on the feasts of St Martin, Easter or Christmas,³⁵ although afterwards they were, with one late exception on the feast of Saints Sergius and Bacchus,³⁶ collected yearly on St Martin's day. One also notices that until 788, payments were rendered variously in money, labour services or in kind – in wax, salt, clothing or cattle;³⁷ but from 788 on, again with one late exception (850),³⁸ precarial *census* were routinely expressed in specie. The amounts varied apparently depending upon the size and value of the grant. Four to six *denarii* seems to have been standard, although larger grants, especially those including churches, fetched considerably more, up to twenty *solidi* in one case.³⁹

At the same time that the precarial *census* began to proliferate, the monks of Weissenburg also altered the conditions under which they accepted gifts from donors. Whereas it was once possible for a patron to make a conditional donation which passed to the monastery only upon

³² *Ibid.*, no. 254: 'In ea ratio ut iam supradictas res, quas iuris mei tradidi ad iam nuncupatum locum, et hoc beneficium, quod abeo nunc in uilla que dicitur Uuesthof duas oba sub usu fructu[a]rao excollerem usque in finem uite mee. Et uxor mea nomine Rihilt et equiuoius meus Gebolt et quisques de nobis tribus alium superuixerit, hoc habeat, et tamen si illa post obitum meum uiro alio se in col[ni]ugium non sotiat.' On the lower margin of the cartulary: 'In ea vero ratione ut ille qui hanc rem prefatam tunc tenet, annis singulis persoluat solidos II ad sanctum Petrum iam dictum monasterium Uuizenburg ad festiuitatem sancti Martini.'

³³ *Ibid.*, no. 214. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 206 (8 April) and 101 (9 May) respectively.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 267 (720, St Martin's day), 136 (745, Christmas), 206 (786, Easter).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 49 (860, Saints Sergius and Bacchus); cf. Alphonse Bernard, 'Der Reliquienschatz der ehemaligen Abtei Weissenburg', *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte* 12 (1937), pp. 73–82, esp. pp. 73–4.

³⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 267 (720), 136 (745), 264 (765), 101 (786), 206 (786), 258 (787), 83 (787), 99 (787), 197 (788), 79 (787–90).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 115 (850). ³⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 200 (847).

the donor's death, this practice came to an end in the 780s.⁴⁰ These donations upon the event of death included the oldest charter in the cartulary, Duke Bonifacius's of 661, and continued up to 787, when the last occurred and when the *census* began to proliferate.⁴¹ The monastery discontinued these transactions at the same time that it began to assess rents, apparently because the monks were intent on extracting *census* from *precariae* and conditional gifts, and the delayed transfer of ownership prevented the collection of revenues from the moment of donation.

Although Weissenburg represents the most striking example of the imposition of rents, the trend had parallels elsewhere, a sign that changes at Weissenburg were related to the broader phenomenon of Carolingian consolidation. Monks farther east at Fulda and Freising also began to assess rents on precarial property in the late eighth century. Of the forty-seven precarial transactions and conditional gifts in the Fulda charters up to 802,⁴² four required a *census*. The *census* first appears in two conditional gifts which can be dated to 776–96 and 780–96. In the first case, a certain Biligart made a donation on the condition that her two sons also be granted usufructuary rights in return for a yearly *census* of twelve *denarii*.⁴³ In the second, a certain Gundher made a donation on the condition that both he and his son obtain the right of usufruct in exchange for a *census* of honey every three years.⁴⁴ On the basis of formula styles, the two charters can be dated more precisely to 789–94 and 788 respectively, or very near to the date of the abrupt emergence of the *census* at Weissenburg.⁴⁵ The next burdened *precaria* dates generally to the period 780–802,⁴⁶ and the first internally dated *precaria* to specify payment of a *census* took place in 801.⁴⁷

The Freising cartulary lacks the rich precarial material of the Weissenburg collection, either because the deacon who compiled the codex, Cozroh, was more interested in donations than *precariae* or because it was more common in Bavaria – as the plethora of extant examples seems to suggest – for patrons to make gifts that lapsed to the control of the church only upon the deaths of the donor and specified heirs.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 54–5.

⁴¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 203 (661), 242 (700), 45 (719), 241 (737), 14 (739), 2 (742), 53 (774), 61 (774), 72 (787).

⁴² *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fuldas*, vol. I, ed. Edmund E. Stengel (Marburg, 1958), nos. 38 (763), 58, 69, 80, 81, 86, 87, 142, 179, 181, 183, 184, 185, 188, 189, 191, 203, 204, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215, 219, 223, 234, 235, 236b, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 264, 265b, 269b, 276, 277, 279, 280, 282, 286, 405, 526, 528 (795–802).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 215. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 234. ⁴⁵ Stengel, *Urkundenbuch Fuldas*, pp. 315, 337.

⁴⁶ *Urkundenbuch Fuldas*, no. 405. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 279.

⁴⁸ *Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Freising*, ed. Theodor Bitterauf, 2 vols., Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte, Neue Folge 4, 5 (Munich, 1905), vol. I, p. xxxxi. As examples of delayed gifts, see nos. 1, 23, 24a, 31, 44.

Despite the heavy representation of straightforward donations and gifts upon the event of death, the Freising charters do include donations which were returned to their respective patrons as 'benefices' from the monastery.⁴⁹ Theodore Bitterauf, the editor of the Freising codex, noticed that in the earlier Freising charters those who received their properties back as benefices did not pay a *census*.⁵⁰ He also noticed that burdens, when they were expected, tended to be required of the heirs of the donors. He pointed to a charter of 768 as the first instance, but the provision – 'cetera non solvat extra constitutum' – is so vague that it is hard to tell from whom a payment might have been expected.⁵¹ In 772, both a father and a son made a donation and received it back as an unburdened benefice, an indication that early on not even heirs were expected to pay a *census*.⁵² The first obvious instances in which a *census* was required of a donor's heirs occurred in donations dated to 776 and 779–83. In the former, a husband and wife made a donation and requested use of the property until death. If their sons wished to continue the arrangement, the charter stipulated they would have to pay a yearly *census* of four measures of grain.⁵³ In the second, an uncle and nephew made a joint donation. According to the agreement, if the nephew produced children, his heirs could obtain use of the property for an annual *census* of twelve *denarii*.⁵⁴ In the 790s, one detects charters at Freising that betray a more insistent application of a *census*. In 794, a certain Hrimcrim made a donation to which his son Tozi consented on the condition that 'he [Tozi] should receive the property in benefice from the hand of [Abbot] Atto, and should pay a *solidus* every year on the feast of St Martin'.⁵⁵ In 799, a certain Gaio made a gift under the condition that he retain usufruct, not of the property he had just donated, but of other properties owned by the monastery, in return for a yearly *census* of a half *solidus* in silver or grain.⁵⁶ By 814 we encounter explicit evidence that a *census* was assessed on property granted back to its donor. In that year, a certain Williperht gave property to Freising, received it back, and agreed to pay whatever *census* the bishop should stipulate. This is probably a late attestation of the practice, because sometime between 792 and 808 the terms of an earlier arrangement were revoked and then renegotiated to include a *census*. A certain Engilsnot returned the 'benefice, which she held at Rotabach, into the hands of the Lord Bishop Atto and afterwards received it from Atto through his [Atto's] mercy in benefice and in *census*'.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ *Trad. Freising*, nos. 11, 28, 30, 38, 39, 42, 48, 50, 59, 77, 80, 100, 110, 122, 124, 139, 143a, 154, 159, 171, 177, 182.

⁵⁰ Bitterauf, *Trad. Freising*, p. xxxvii. ⁵¹ *Trad. Freising*, no. 28. ⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 48.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, no. 77. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 100. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 171. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 177. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 159.

The same pattern holds true in the charters from Passau, Regensburg and Mondsee, where a *census* first is required in documents dated to 789, 792 and 793/4, respectively, in each case from original donors, although the paucity of surviving charters from these collections makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about practices at the three institutions.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the patterns do correlate with those evident at Weissenburg, Fulda and Freising.

If we move south of the Alps to central Italy, we find a slightly later, although similar, transition to burdened grants around 800 in the charters of Farfa.⁵⁹ In 799, a certain Sarengo petitioned the monastery for lifelong usufruct of properties near Milan and Pavia, which had been given to Farfa by a certain Aimono, on the condition that he, Sarengo, pay the value of ten *mancosos* in gold or silver yearly on the feast of St Martin.⁶⁰ Similarly in 806, a certain Mellito asked Farfa to grant him and his wife Tatberga lifelong use of properties that had once belonged to an Acersino and a Zarono on the condition that the couple pay a pension (*pensio*) of six *denarii* every year on 15 August, the feast of Mary.⁶¹ In the next several years individuals began paying pensions, the functional equivalent in Italy of a *census*, for use of their own donations.⁶² In 808, a certain Massiolo donated property that had previously been given to him by a certain Rodorico.⁶³ He petitioned the monastery for lifetime usufruct for himself and his two sons on the condition that they yield a pension of three *denarii* on the feast of Mary. By 812, petitioners were agreeing to pay pensions for continued use of their own property. In that year a certain couple, Hilderic and Sinda, asked for lifetime usufruct of the property they had donated, promising to pay a pension of nine *denarii* on the feast of Mary.⁶⁴ A charter the following year makes it clear that petitioners were paying pensions for continued use of family properties. In 813, a certain nun, Elina, donated a range of her own properties, as well as those that had come to her from her sister Tatberga, and enjoyed lifetime use for a yearly pension of three *solidi* in silver, or its equivalent, on the feast of

⁵⁸ *Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Passau*, ed. Max Heuwieser, Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen Geschichte, Neue Folge 6 (Munich, 1930), no. 31, p. 27; *Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Regensburg und des Klosters S. Emmeram*, ed. Josef Widemann, Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen Geschichte, Neue Folge 8 (Munich, 1943; reprint: Aalen, 1988), no. 8; *Das älteste Traditionsbuch des Klosters Mondsee*, ed. Gebhard Rath and Erich Reiter, Forschungen zur Geschichte Oberösterreichs 16 (Linz, 1989), no. 10.

⁵⁹ Gregorio di Catino, *Il Regesto di Farfa*, ed. Ignazio Giorgi and Ugo Balzani, 5 vols., Biblioteca della Società Romana di Storia Patria (Rome, 1879–1914), vol. II.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 179. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, no. 198.

⁶² On the equivalence of the terms, cf. *ibid.*, nos. 218/19.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, no. 206. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 228.

Mary.⁶⁵ In every instance thereafter grants of property to petitioners were burdened.⁶⁶

Because we have no competing counter examples, it is impossible to say whether between 799 and 813 we are witnessing the stepwise assessment of a pension first on properties donated by someone other than the petitioner and then on family properties granted back to the donors, although this is what the charters taken at face value suggest. What we can say is that the pension suddenly appeared sometime between 788 and 799, and was assessed uniformly thereafter. In the eighteen cases before 799 where the monastery granted individuals usufruct of property – cases which range from 762 to 788 – none was required to pay a pension;⁶⁷ but in the eleven cases after 799, all bear the annual burden. The nun Elina's career as a donor spans this period and neatly encapsulates the change: whereas her continued use of a donation in 813 required a pension, her use of an array of properties bestowed to Farfa over forty years before, in 770 and 771, had stipulated none at all.⁶⁸

We also notice at Farfa, as at Weissenburg, a monetary assessment and a regularized date for collection. In all the burdened transactions after 799, the pension is expressed in specie or its equivalent in kind; and in most cases the yearly payment was to be offered up on 15 August, the feast of Mary, the patroness of Farfa.⁶⁹

Some charters antedating 799 do record individuals making yearly payments to Farfa, but these 'payments' are more properly understood either as annual gifts by the prosperous or as dues rendered by the servile or poor. In the former cases, families of means might pledge annual disbursements of grain or animals in support of various monastic activities. For example, payments and reimbursements made by a certain Teodoro in 767 appear to be supports willed by his parents to the oratory and required of their descendants forever, not pensions for continued usufruct of property. And in 776, when a certain Teudemondo donated some property, he also promised to 'give', rather than pay, ten 'fat hogs' every year, a gift presumably linked to the stipulated oblation of his son, since

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 218/19.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 220 (813), 226 (c. 802–15), 257 (819), 258 (819), 261 (820) and 289 (824). In one apparent exception in 820, a pension in return for usufruct was not mentioned, but this was the record of a dispute, the point of which was to clarify ultimate ownership of the property, not the details of the original *precario*, which presumably was burdened; *ibid.*, no. 276.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 58 (762), 61 (763), 66 (764), 79 (767), 80 (768), 82 (770), 88 (770), 94 (770), 95 (771), 96 (772), 97 (773), 121 (778), 131 (778), 134 (778), 142 (780), 155 (785), 158 (786), 160 (788).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 94 and 95.

⁶⁹ In three cases pensions were offered up variously on St Martin's day (no. 179), on St Valentine's day (no. 289) and on the nativity of Mary (no. 258); *ibid.*, nos. 179, 289 and 258 respectively.

families commonly were expected to send gifts with novices.⁷⁰ That is, these 'payments' were not expressed as pensions for the right to use property. In the latter cases, the humbler classes, no matter their legal category, whether they be *coloni* or freedmen, usually had to pay a *census* or *pensio* in kind, in wine, grain, chickens or cattle, to their masters at Farfa in return for their tenancies.⁷¹ Such burdens also fell upon poorer free persons who had indentured themselves to the monastery.⁷² This might suggest that in the eighth century, aristocrats would have perceived the *census* to be a mark of subordination that expressed the subjection of family rights to the monastery.

To sum up, an indiscriminate precarial *census* proliferated in the Weissenburg, Fulda, Freising and Farfa charters shortly after Herstal. The *census* appeared at Weissenburg after 785, at Fulda between 788 and 794, at Freising slightly earlier, between 776 and 783, and at Farfa sometime between 788 and 799. The Freising material reveals additionally that, early on, a delayed *census* might be imposed, since the first two burdened *precariae*, dated to 776 and 779–83, stipulated a *census* only on heirs of original donors, whereas the next three burdened *precariae*, dated to 799, 799–802 and 792–808, required a *census* of original donors. In this respect, the Freising charters echo those of Weissenburg, wherein one finds an early *precaria* of 745 which stipulated a *census* if the donor's heir should ever want to resume the grant. That is to say, although rare, *precariae* transacted at Weissenburg and Freising before 786 might contain a grandfather clause that stipulated a *census* for the heirs of an original donor. After 786, Weissenburg, Freising and Fulda might require a *census* of any precarist, even if that person were the original donor of the property. At Farfa, the burdening of a donor's own gifts occurred slightly later, around 812.

Despite the similarities among monasteries, there were major differences. In contrast to Weissenburg and Farfa, the exaction of a precarial *census* remained the exception at Fulda and Freising after 786, rather than the norm. Of the first 500 records in the Freising collection up to 824, 105 mention arrangements for benefices, though only 41 were burdened with a *census*, or about 40 per cent of the benefices granted out.⁷³ This may

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 48 and 124.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 41, 97, 157 and 168. However, there were exceptions in cases of well-to-do dependants, who could donate property to Farfa and continue to use it unburdened, cf. *ibid.*, nos. 49 and 66.

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 41 and 115.

⁷³ *Trad. Freising*, nos. 11, 30, 38, 39, 42, 48, 50, 59, 77, 80, 100, 110, 122, 124, 139, 143a, 159, 171, 177, 182, 195, 197, 224, 235, 240, 247, 255, 257, 263, 273, 278b, 287, 295, 296, 300, 302, 305, 311, 313, 315, 317, 320, 329, 333b, 336, 338, 340, 343, 345, 346, 348, 351, 353, 354, 357, 358, 363, 364, 365, 368, 369b, 370, 372, 373a, 376, 384, 390, 392, 394, 398a, 400b, 401a, 402, 405, 417, 421, 422, 426, 435c, 436, 438, 439, 441, 445, 457, 460, 461, 462, 464ab, 465, 468, 469, 474b, 475, 477, 478, 482, 484, 486, 487, 488, 490, 491, 492, 500. (The italicized charters were burdened.)

underestimate the rate of burdening, because many of these charters are records of disputes or brief notices which make reference to benefices but are not the kinds of document that one would expect to elaborate on rents. A donation in 829 to a certain Memmo and his son Isanhart specifies that they were to receive their properties back in benefice 'without *census*', a proviso which might indicate that either rent generally was expected by then or that the bishops suspended burdens at will. The latter seems the more likely, since even donations to Freising that make provisions for benefices frequently do not mention burdens, and many still continue to require *census* only of heirs.⁷⁴ At Fulda the rate was even lower. Of the first 500 charters up to 802, 48 record grants of property, or about 10 per cent, although only 5 precarial and conditional-gift transactions included a *census*,⁷⁵ or only about one-tenth of the benefices granted out. Presumably, particular local circumstances accounted for the variation from monastery to monastery. The concurrent levy of an indiscriminate *census* on the ecclesiastical *precariae* of a number of widely scattered monasteries, as well as the standardization of the time of collection and the method of payment, nevertheless point to a centralizing influence at work in the last quarter of the eighth century, an influence which was especially pronounced in Alsace.

The precarial census in the west: the evidence of the formulas

When we turn to the charter formulas, the notarial paradigms that served as guides for scribes, we discover the same general pattern as in the charters. The precarial *census* generally does not appear in the earliest collections of formulas from Marculf, Tours, Bourges and Sens, all of which have been dated to the period before 775. In all, we possess thirteen precarial, presterial and conditional-gift formulas from these four earlier collections: six from Marculf, two from Tours, one from Bourges and four from Sens.⁷⁶ Only two of these stipulate a *census*. One appears in a precarial formula from Tours dated to the mid-eighth century and deals with a request for monastic property which neither the precarist nor any of his kin had donated.⁷⁷ The other appears in a presterial formula of Sens whose accompanying precarial formula does not, however, mention a *census*.⁷⁸ The presence of a *census* in one of the four precarial and presterial formulas from Sens, which have been dated to between 768 and 775, only

⁷⁴ *Trad. Freising*, nos. 536 (826), 607a (834). ⁷⁵ *Urkundenbuch Fuldas*, nos. 215, 234, 279, 287, 405.

⁷⁶ *Marculfi Formulae*, bk 2, nos. 3, 5, 6, 9, 39, 40; *Formulae Turonenses*, nos. 1 and 7; *Formulae Bituricensis*, no. 2; *Formulae Senonenses*, nos. 15, 16, 32, 33.

⁷⁷ *Formulae Turonenses*, no. 7. ⁷⁸ *Formulae Senonenses*, nos. 15/16.

slightly precedes the proliferation of the *census* in actual charters transacted in the last quarter of the eighth century.

Most of the later precarial, presterial and conditional-gift formulas, forty-seven in all, that date from around 770 to the last quarter of the ninth century, stipulate that precarists should pay a *census*.⁷⁹ The *census* is absent in only ten. Four of these appear in the *Formulae Salicae Merkelianae* and the *Collectio Flaviniacensis*, and constitute near-verbatim reproductions of earlier unburdened formulas from Marculf and Tours, and so can be left aside.⁸⁰ Three others deal with gifts either for admittance to the monastery or for material support from the monks in cases of infirmity, poverty or childlessness.⁸¹ These do not explicitly stipulate a *census*, but the donation of property in return for a favour or material support from a monastery could be construed as a (desperate) form of payment. That leaves three formulas which do not stipulate a *census*, all appearing in the *Formulae Sangallenses Miscellaneae*, which date to 883–96, and so they may say something about developments in that later period.⁸² A trend then is clear: a *census* rarely appears in precarial, presterial or conditional-gift formulas before the last quarter of the eighth century but is overwhelmingly present in those that postdate 775.

The evidence of the formulas is valuable, not simply because it corroborates the patterns detected in the charters, but also because formulas, designed as they were to serve as general guides for writing up charters, can compensate for the fragmentary survival of property records and allow us to posit a broader reality to the patterns elucidated in the charter collections. Furthermore, the geographical provenance of the earlier formulas complements the patterns elucidated in the charters. Whereas the major, extant charter collections arose overwhelmingly in the east – from the Rhine valley and beyond – or from the south, in Italy, all the formulas predating 775 originated in west Francia. Thus, the patterns in the quasi-prescriptive formulas corroborate those identified in the charters, and taken together both indicate that the ecclesiastical *census* was

⁷⁹ *Formulae Salicae Bignonianae*, nos. 21, 22; *Formulae Salicae Merkelianae*, nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 22, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37; *Formulae Salicae Lindenbergianae*, nos. 3, 4, 18; *Formulae Augienses: Collectio B*, nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 37; *Formulae Sangallenses Miscellaneae*, nos. 2, 3, 14, 15, 22; *Collectio Sangallensis Salomonis III. Tempore Conscripta*, in *Formulae Merovingici*, pp. 390–437: nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 21; *Additamenta e codicibus Collectionis Sangallensis*, in *Formulae Merovingici*, pp. 433–7: no. 4; *Collectio Flaviniacensis*, in *Formulae Merovingici*, pp. 469–92: nos. 14, 88, 89; and *Additamenta Collectionis Flaviniacensis*, in *Formulae Merovingici*, pp. 489–92: nos. 3, 4.

⁸⁰ *Formulae Salicae Merkelianae*, nos. 4 (cf. *Formulae Turonenses*, no. 1) and 22 (cf. *Marculfi Formulae* bk 2, no. 9); and *Collectio Flaviniacensis*, nos. 88, 89 (cf. *Marculfi Formulae* bk 2, nos. 39, 40).

⁸¹ *Formulae Salicae Lindenbergianae*, no. 18; *Formulae Augienses: Collectio B*, no. 11; *Collectio Sangallensis*, no. 15.

⁸² *Formulae Sangallenses Miscellaneae*, nos. 3, 14, 15.

rarely assessed before 775 but more commonly afterwards. In the instances where the precarial *census* does appear in charters or formulas before 775, it was attached to grants of property to which the precarist had either no prior or a more distant relationship, or it might be required from the heirs of an original donor.

In sum, the charters and the formulas together suggest two conclusions: the proliferation of the *census* in ecclesiastical *precariae* was connected in some way to the royal imperatives expressed in the capitulary of Herstal; and, secondly, the concept of assessing a *census* on *precariae verbo regis* at Estinnes, and then again at Herstal, most likely was adapted from local precedents. As protectors of ecclesiastical freedoms and grantors of ecclesiastical privileges, Carolingian rulers merely inserted themselves into an existing proprietary system that allowed them to endow and reward retainers with as little disruption of local sensibilities as possible. That is, the types of precarial property that a monastery might be tempted to burden before 775 resemble in important respects the properties granted out as *precariae verbo regis*. In both cases, the holder's relationship to the property was more abstract and presumably, for that reason, the monks felt justified in burdening the precarists.

THE COUNCIL OF ESTINNES AND ALEMANNIA

Although the widespread practice of assessing a *census* on any *precaria* was connected in some way to the consolidation of Carolingian authority in the latter eighth century, the concept itself predated Herstal and can be traced to yet earlier local precedents. In the charters of Murbach in southern Alsace and St Gall in Alemannia, a precarial *census* was regularly assessed long before the last quarter of the eighth century. Only a handful of the charters from the monastery at Murbach survive, but all eleven extant precarial and conditional-gift transactions specify a *census*.⁸³ Three were transacted before 770. One, a *precaria* dated to 767, specified that a mother and her son pay a *census* of clothing yearly on the feast of St Martin for usufruct of her donation.⁸⁴ The other two *precariae* belonged to Hiltrad and Hildifrid, whose cases we have touched on above. These *precariae*, transacted in 735 and 737, stipulated the payment of a *census* of wax at Christmas and Easter, respectively, in exchange for properties which previously had been given by the Etichonid count Eberhard.⁸⁵

The eight later *precariae* and conditional gifts from Murbach, ranging from 784 to 811, reveal that the method of payment had changed.

⁸³ *Regesta Alsaciae*, nos. 125, 128, 202, 307, 335, 339, 346, 354, 368, 404, 419.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 202. ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 125, 128.

Whereas the *census* had been assessed in kind variously on Christmas, Easter or St Martin's day in the three transactions before 770, afterwards it was uniformly expressed in monetary terms, either two, four or six *denarii*, and was to be paid yearly on the feast of St Martin. In these respects, practices at Murbach resemble those elucidated in the Weissenburg charters. It is also possible that in the first half of the eighth century Murbach required a *census* only from precarists related collaterally, or not at all, to the original donor, since the two earliest *precariae* that do survive fit that profile. If so, practices at Murbach echo those found early on at Weissenburg and in the early formula from Tours.

It is a pity we have no more charters from Murbach. The proportion of precarial transfers in those that survive offers a tantalizing glimpse of the promising transactions that Murbach must have preserved and what they might have revealed about families and precarial traditions in southern Alsace. It remains propitious that the few extant precarial documents from Murbach, whether earlier or later, all stipulate a *census*, although the lack of charters makes it difficult to know with any certainty how regularly Murbach burdened *precariae*. Fortunately, abundant documentation survives from neighbouring St Gall in southern Alemannia, a monastery whose cultural and diplomatic traditions were similar to those of Murbach.

The Alemannic charters represent the most startling contrast to the trends witnessed at Weissenburg, Fulda, Freising and Farfa, and in the formula collections. The *census* is almost without exception required of all *precariae* and conditional gifts at St Gall after 746, regardless of the precarist's relationship to the property.⁸⁶ Of the sixteen charters which predate 746, four record precarial or conditional-gift transactions. The earliest, dated to 716–20, required that the donor and his sons pay a *census* in kind, and includes a provision that allowed the sons' sons to assume the *census*, if they desired.⁸⁷ Two others in 744 and 745 recorded gifts in return for material support, and the fourth, a *precaria* of 744, did not require a *census*.⁸⁸ Thus, before 746 St Gall might assess a precarial *census* even on original donors, although they did not always do so; but after 746 the monastery, with some rare exceptions, regularly levied a *census* on all precarial grants.

The assessment of a *census* in return for use of property at St Gall did have precedent in earlier Alemannic legal traditions. The ecclesiastical

⁸⁶ Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Beobachtungen zur Grundherrschaftsentwicklung der Abtei St. Gallen vom 8. zum 10. Jahrhundert', in Rösener ed., *Strukturen der Grundherrschaft*, pp. 197–246: see table 1 there on *precariae*, pp. 232–3, and table 1b on gifts and their conditions, pp. 234–5.

⁸⁷ *Urkundenbuch Sanct Gallen*, vol. I, no. 3. ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 9, 10, 12.

census appears in the *Leges Alamannorum*, first promulgated in the early seventh century by Clothar II, reissued in the early eighth by the Alemannic duke Lantfrid and then again in the latter eighth century by Charlemagne.⁸⁹ The laws stipulate that any 'free man, who will have given property to a church and affirmed it with a charter. . . and afterwards received it from the pastor of the church in benefice for the purpose of gathering necessary victuals for the rest of his days, let him pay to the church a *census*, which he promises, for that land, and let this be done with a valid document, so that after his death none of his heirs contradict this'.⁹⁰ How accurately this prescription reflects actual practice in the seventh century is impossible to say, but the earliest St Gall charters, few though they may be, give some expression to what the laws set forth. The unique, early assessment of a precarial *census* on an original donor sometime between 716 and 720 at St Gall, and the unprecedented, regular assessment of *census* on *precaria* after 746, echoes the indiscriminate requirement in Alemannic law which appears in no other early medieval law code. The reasons for this Alemannic peculiarity may bear some connection to the attempts of Merovingian kings and dukes to impose on Alemannia a political and ecclesiastical organization in the seventh and early eighth centuries. In comparison with other early medieval law codes, the Alemannic laws devote more attention to the protection of ecclesiastical personnel and rights.⁹¹

The St Gall charters also reveal a shift, albeit earlier than elsewhere, from an irregular assessment of a *census* on precarial grants before 746 to a routine requirement afterwards. The regularization of the precarial *census* early on at St Gall, and perhaps at Murbach, probably was connected in some way to the intermittent pacification of Alemannia by Charles Martel and his sons. The chronology certainly is suggestive. The decrees of the Council of Estinnes in 743 that laid out the conditions for Carloman's proto *precaria verbo regis* were promulgated during the last phase of unrest in Alemannia. Just one year before, the Alemannic duke Theudebald had rebelled against the Carolingians but was defeated two years later in Alsace by Pippin, who promptly dissolved the dukedom. Resistance continued into the next year, when Carloman brutally crushed the rebellion.⁹² The prescriptions of the council might not have been issued

⁸⁹ *Leges Alamannorum*, 2nd edn, ed. Karl Lehmann and Karl August Eckhard, *MGH Legum Sectio 1: Leges Nationum Germanicarum* 5, 1 (Hanover, 1966), c. 2, no. 1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Ian Wood, 'Jural Relations among the Franks and Alemanni', in Ian Wood ed., *Franks and Alemanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*, *Studies in Historical Archaeology* 3 (Woodbridge, U.K., 1998), pp. 213–25.

⁹² *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 48, 153, 157.

solely in reaction to events in Alemannia, but the Alemannic duke posed the greatest challenge to Carolingian ambitions in the early 740s. The reference at Estinnes to 'the hostilities of other nations' suggests that Carolingian rulers surely had the troublesome Alemannic dukes in mind when Carloman ordered monasteries to lend property to his supporters.

While the prescriptions of Estinnes probably were connected to the uprisings in Alemannia, Carloman's manipulation of precarial practices to his own ends does not by itself explain the burdening of nearly every precarial transaction at St Gall after 746. It may simply be that the threat of Carolingian expropriation provided a powerful, if indirect, stimulus to donate property, and for St Gall, in response, to assess regular rents. Rolf Sprandel postulated long ago that the surge in donations to St Gall post 745 was provoked by fears of seizure.⁹³ Pursuing this line of thinking, we might surmise that Alemannic aristocrats consigned their property to St Gall because they knew they could get them back in the form of precarial benefices and so protect themselves from Carolingian rulers who, they calculated, would be more cautious when it came to seizing property which technically belonged to God. Similarly, Charlemagne's conquest of northern Italy in 774 appears to have triggered a surge in gifts to monasteries by Lombard aristocrats pursuing a similar strategy.⁹⁴ At St Gall, the monks either did not fully trust these new, presumably opportunistic donors, and wanted compensation for the risk, or realized their advantageous position within a Carolingian framework which generally respected ecclesiastical property rights as a way to augment support for royal authority, or both. Whatever the motives, the way was paved by local Alemannic law, which provided a legal justification for the routine application of the *census*.

The power relationships established in the aftermath of the suppression of Alemannia do make for a striking prefigurement of the general situation in the late 770s when, having asserted firm control over the Frankish world, Charlemagne issued his capitulary at Herstal. In both cases, Carolingian intervention coincided with noticeable changes in local practices. In the former, Carolingian conquest was followed by a surge in gifts and the routine assessment of a precarial *census* at St Gall; in the latter, Carolingian legislation on precarial rents anticipated the proliferation of an indiscriminate precarial *census* – at some monasteries, routinely – in the last quarter of the eighth century.

⁹³ Rolf Sprandel, *Das Kloster St Gallen in der Verfassung des karolingischen Reiches*, Forschungen zur oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 7 (Freiburg, 1958), pp. 31–2.

⁹⁴ Schmid, 'Zur Ablösung der Langobardenherrschaft', pp. 289–303.

Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe

Whether the regular levy of an indiscriminate precarial *census* at St Gall suggested a model for emulation is impossible to say; however, it may be significant that St Gall was not the only monastery to levy a *census* on the *precaria* of an original donor before 775. I have found only two other early examples, both from the monastery at Gorze, a foundation closely connected (it turns out) to Pippin and his reformist relative Chrodegang, the influential bishop of Metz.⁹⁵ These *precariae* stipulated a payment in kind (wax) which, similar to the pattern found in the Weissenburg and Murbach charters, came to be expressed as a monetary *census* in precarial transactions after 775.⁹⁶

THE VALUATION OF THE PRECARIAL CENSUS

The complex interplay of royal exhortation and local practice is also manifest in the variation of the *census* stipulated at Estinnes and Herstal, and in the discrepancy between the amounts prescribed in these central directives and the values expressed in extant precarial charters. At Estinnes, Carloman imposed a *census* of one *solidus* per farmhouse, whereas at Herstal Charlemagne set a much lower rate of one *solidus* per fifty farmsteads and required the additional payment of a *nona* and a *decima*. It may simply be that the *census*, at least the one assessed on the *precaria verbo regis*, had become by the time of Herstal a token payment in recognition of the proprietary rights of the lending institution.⁹⁷ The amount that holders of *precariae* at the word of the king had to pay was reduced, so the reasoning goes, from the rather steep rate of one *solidus* per farmhouse at Estinnes, to one *solidus* per fifty farmsteads at Herstal, in order to take into account the additional burdens of the *nona* and *decima*.⁹⁸ Indeed, if the smallness of assessments on some ecclesiastical *precariae* is any guide, these *census* must have been paid in recognition of the monastery's ownership, a so-called *Annerkennungsziins*, rather than as an economic rent.⁹⁹

The novel appearance of the *nona* and *decima* at Herstal also begs for an explanation. In his careful investigation of the origin and function of the *nona* and *decima* in Carolingian times, Giles Constable argued that the *nona* and *decima* was a secular rent for ecclesiastical property, to be distinguished

⁹⁵ The *census* appears in two charters dated to 761 and 775, the first of which is located in a group of eleven donation charters that cluster around Pippin and Chrodegang, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Gorze*, nos. 7, 22.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 30 (790), 34 (795), 35 (795), 38 (795), 39 (796), 43 (804), 44 (811), 51 (848), 56 (856), 58 (857).

⁹⁷ Brunner, *Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. II, pp. 337–8. ⁹⁸ Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. II, p. 24.

⁹⁹ Lütge, *Agrarverfassung*, pp. 228–9; Goetz, 'Beobachtungen', p. 228; and Ogris, 'Precaria', column 1885.

from, and paid in addition to, the normal tithe that all Christians were required to offer up whether they held church property or not.¹⁰⁰ Since Constable felt that the capitulary of Herstal, as well as subsequent conciliar acts and royal decrees, was concerned mainly with the *precaria verbo regis*, he concluded that the *nona* and *decima* applied only to royal *precariae*.¹⁰¹ In his view, only by the mid-ninth century was the *nona* and *decima* expected of any holder of church property.¹⁰² This *nona* and *decima* was supposed to be paid along with a *census*, although in subsequent ninth-century decrees provisions were made for renters to commute the *nona* and *decima* into a monetary *census*.¹⁰³ In the late ninth and tenth centuries, the *nona* and *decima* disappeared and were replaced by a 'ground rent' in money or in kind.¹⁰⁴

While this might appear to be the situation in 'actual practice drawn from [royal] charters',¹⁰⁵ the evidence of monastic charters and the capitulary of Herstal complicates this view considerably. To begin with, we have no way of assessing implementation, owing to the lack of surviving records of *precariae verbo regis*. If the repetition of royal decrees after Charlemagne is any indication, monks must have had problems collecting the *nona* and *decima*. In addition, many of the councils and capitularies that Constable cites, including Herstal, were written broadly to cover all *precariae*, not merely the *precaria verbo regis*.¹⁰⁶ Third, as we have seen, many ecclesiastical *precariae* and conditional gifts transacted by churches after Herstal did not include a *census*; and I am not aware of a single monastic charter in the Vosges region that stipulated payment of the *decima* and *nona*, either in the late eighth century or in the mid-ninth century, when Constable argues from royal decrees that the *nona* and *decima* came to be expected of all precarial holders.

In view of the relatively abundant evidence for the wide assessment of a *census* after 775 in ecclesiastical *precariae*, and the absence of any mention of the *nona* and *decima* in the same transactions, we perhaps should reconfigure the relationship of the *nona* and *decima* to the *census*: the ninth-century decrees that commuted the *nona* and *decima* into a money rent, and the eventual transformation of the *nona* and *decima* into a rent in the tenth century do not attest to the evolution of the *nona* and *decima* into a *census*; rather, they suggest that the *nona* and *decima* were assimilated into the customary form of payment, the ordinary precarial *census*.

This is not a sign that the king's authority was irrelevant in local affairs. As Constable's researches illustrate so well, subsequent royal charters and correspondence seem to be preoccupied disproportionately with the

¹⁰⁰ Constable, 'Nona et Decima', pp. 233–5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 227, 235 and 241.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 235, and p. 240.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 237–49.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 227–37.

payment of the *nona* and *decima* by holders of *precariae verbo regis*. Scarcely any such contracts survive, but the tradition of ecclesiastical complaining and royal intervention is so emphatic we can hardly doubt the existence of conflict. Since we can find no evidence that monks wanted to extract similar dues from ordinary precarists, we have to conclude that the complaints about the payment of the *nona* and *decima* arose from disputes with holders of royal *precariae*.

That said, we also have observed that only in the last quarter of the eighth century did most monasteries begin to levy a *census* more indiscriminately on their *precariae*. While bishops and abbots might or might not routinely burden their own *precariae*, they apparently wanted to distinguish property granted out to traditional patrons, who might have to pay a *census*, from those granted out to the king's men, who were expected to pay a *census* as well as a *nona* and *decima*. The absence of the ninth and tenth in the charters of traditional patrons suggests that it was the property granted out in *precaria verbo regis* – the type of property most likely to slip from ecclesiastical control – from which abbots and bishops were intent on extracting the more burdensome *nona* and *decima*. At Herstal, prelates apparently sought out Charlemagne's support for their right to be compensated for *precariae verbo regis* and confirmation of a theoretical right to levy the same burdens on property granted out at their own discretion. Monasteries might not always have assessed even a *census* on their own *precariae* or recalled property 'whenever it pleased them', but they insisted on the right to do so. In the end, we should not expect royal decrees – derived from specific complaints and demands made to the king, which were then elaborated into general principles that applied everywhere and nowhere at once – to overlap seamlessly with local practice.

If the *census* demanded of traditional patrons was lower than the combined payments decreed at Herstal, it was noticeably higher than the stipulated token *census* which, presumably, was assessed in recognition of the grantor's titular ownership. The *census* in ordinary precarial and conditional-gift charters more closely approximates what Dopsch termed a monetary rent because the payments in ecclesiastical *precariae* were not token at all:¹⁰⁷ they fluctuated with the amount of property, ranging from two *denarii* to twenty *solidi*, or even more. From the Weissenburg charters we can infer that on average one farmhouse fetched around three to four *denarii* in rent per year. For example, in 808 a certain Erbio gave six and one-third farmhouses (*hobae*) and received from Weissenburg usufruct of

¹⁰⁷ Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. II, pp. 268–72.

a manor (*curtis indominicatus*), a farmhouse and a vineyard for a yearly rent of two *solidi*, or twenty-four *denarii*.¹⁰⁸ If we assume an equivalence between what Erbio gave and what he received, we come up with a rent of just under four *denarii* per farmhouse. That same year, Theodo and Agothiu gave two farmyards (*curtiles*) and received them back for a yearly census of seven *denarii*, or three and a half *denarii* per farmyard.¹⁰⁹ This is considerably lower than the twelve *denarii* per farmhouse recommended at Estinnes and its presumed equivalent in the *nona*, *decima* and *census* expected of all precarial holders at Herstal. Leaving the *nona* and *decima* aside, however, it is noticeably higher than the token *census* specified at Herstal.

When we consider that the proliferation of precarial rents in the late eighth century coincided with Charlemagne's assertive rule of the Frankish empire, we might infer that these revenues were raised in part to offset the demands imposed on monasteries from above. Monasteries certainly stood to collect a substantial amount from their precarists. Hans-Werner Goetz has concluded that at St Gall the *census*, in particular the precarial *census*, must have constituted the most important source of revenue after the direct yields reaped from monastic estates.¹¹⁰ Aggregate figures for Alsatian monasteries do not survive, but with the help of records from the lower-Seine monastery of St Wandrille, we can estimate just how sizeable this income might have been. The ninth-century *Gesta* of that monastery's abbots provides aggregate figures of property loaned out at the death of Abbot Witlaic in 787.¹¹¹ According to the *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii*, at that time 2,120 of the monastery's 3,433 whole farmsteads had been granted out in benefice. If we assume three *denarii* per farmstead and a uniform assessment, as at Weissenburg, Farfa or St Gall, the monastery theoretically stood to collect about 530 *solidi* a year. This estimate probably is conservative, because the *Gesta* also tells us that the monastery had granted out 40 partial *manes*, 235 small service tenures and 28 mills, all of which presumably would have garnered additional revenues. Nor does the *Gesta* divulge the number of dependent churches held by beneficiaries. If the anecdotal evidence of other charters is any indication, these lucrative properties fetched considerably higher *census*. Thus, the revenues a major monastery could garner from rents added up to a tidy sum.

Whether they chose to is another matter. As we have seen, not all monasteries assessed a *census* routinely, a discrepancy that arose probably

¹⁰⁸ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 19. ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 20. ¹¹⁰ Goetz, 'Beobachtungen', pp. 226–9.

¹¹¹ *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii*, ed. F. Lohier and R. Laporte (Rouen, 1936), c. 11, 3, p. 82.

from variations among local traditions, the distribution of power or the relative wealth of ecclesiastical institutions. Some monasteries founded and patronized by the regional aristocracy, such as Weissenburg and St Gall, were more dependent upon the goodwill of traditional patrons than, say, a lavishly endowed royal foundation such as Fulda, or an episcopal church such as Freising which could call upon the resources of a diocese. For monks residing in the former monasteries, *precaria* apparently presented a lucrative source of revenue to be exploited.

DOUBLE OR NOTHING: THE INCENTIVES TO GIVE AND PAY

Monasteries, backed by their powerful Carolingian patrons, might have achieved the leverage to assess a *census* whenever they pleased, but the assessments would have done them little good had many of their ordinary patrons concluded that the payments were too burdensome and stopped giving. This did not happen. To judge from the survival of charters at Fulda, St Gall and Freising, donations to monasteries increased dramatically after 760 and accelerated during the reign of Charlemagne. This surge largely corroborates David Herlihy's wider statistical evaluation which charts a similar bulge throughout early medieval Europe.¹¹² The charter collections and Herlihy's figures may underestimate the amount of giving activity in the pre-Carolingian period, because monasteries probably were more likely to preserve charters transacted under the new regime. Nonetheless, neglect of Merovingian charters alone cannot account for the surviving patterns. At Weissenburg, for example, neither a preference for Carolingian-era records nor survival from the ravages of theft, loss, fire or mould can account for the distribution of charters. The Weissenburg codex preserves more late Merovingian charters (76) than it does charters from the ninth-century (51), when the cartulary was assembled. It also encodes a noticeable surge in giving in the late eighth century: of the 273 charters in the cartulary, a conspicuous 116, or 42 per cent, date to the three decades between 770 and 800.

Powerful, positive incentives, namely the expectation that one could receive an even larger grant in return for a donation, compelled lay aristocrats to continue to give property despite the financial burdens. Probably as early as the seventh century, monasteries had allowed donors to receive more property in *precaria* than they had donated. An early formula of Marculf outlines a deal whereby a precarist could obtain property donated to the monastery by someone else in return for the

¹¹² David Herlihy, 'Church Property on the European Continent, 701–1200', *Speculum* 36 (1961), pp. 81–105, esp. pp. 87–92.

donation of a piece of his own property which he also would retain in usufruct.¹¹³ Apparently, the practice served to attract donations with the prospect that donors could augment the counter grant. In this way, the monastery received titular control of another property and the donor reaped the practical benefits of two or more properties. How widespread or frequent this practice was in the seventh and early eighth centuries is impossible to tell, but such transactions may have been limited to wealthier institutions with an abundance of property to grant out.

The practice evidently became more common as monasteries grew in power and wealth under Carolingian kings. The crescendo of donations in the last quarter of the eighth century, and the subsequent glut of available property, probably explains the appearance in the Weissenburg charters of precarial and conditional-gift transactions that begin to record requests for property donated by the petitioner, plus additional monastic properties. The first appeared in 801, when a certain Willibald agreed to pay a five-*denarii census* for the use of property he had already given.¹¹⁴ He also 'accepted in benefice' half of a homestead belonging to Weissenburg in return for a yearly *census* of seven *denarii*. His example was followed by at least four other precarists at Weissenburg in subsequent decades.¹¹⁵

It seems that donors everywhere came to expect that monasteries would grant them usufruct of up to triple the amount of their gifts. At the Council of Tours in 813 – at about the same time that the *Brevium Exempla* prescribed the proper documentation of *precaria* – Charlemagne inquired into complaints from men 'who are said to be disinherited' because their 'father, mother, brother or other close relatives had given [property] to the churches of God, so that he or she might receive back in his or her name a *precaria* from the rectors of the churches'.¹¹⁶ The emperor declared that no one stepped forward to complain at the assembly,

for there is hardly anyone who gives his property to churches, unless he receives from the properties of the church as much as he gave, or double or triple in usufruct, and then procures from the rectors [a provision] for them – either for a certain number of children or near relatives – that after his death his descendants might claim [the properties] for themselves, under the same condition that he had held [them].

The emperor went on to point out that this had become the general custom and explained that heirs who 'want to pursue the gifts of their parents from which they are excluded by law' had the option to

¹¹³ *Marculfi Formulae*, bk 2, nos. 39, 40. ¹¹⁴ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 255.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 151, 167, 172, 198. ¹¹⁶ *Concilia aevi Karolini*, vol. II, no. 38, c. 51.

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‘commend themselves to the rectors of the churches and receive the inheritance in benefice, from which they might be able to sustain and support themselves’. In other words, from the emperor’s point of view, donors, precarists and their heirs were getting a lot in return for the trouble of working with churches and had little to complain about.

Charlemagne’s decree also reveals the extent to which the political order had been transformed by the early ninth century. Monasteries and churches had become fabulously well-endowed and, perhaps because of that, lay aristocrats continued to lavish property on them and to submit to monastic overlordship with the prospects of greater returns. The result was that the monastic community of monks and their benefactors had expanded to incorporate an ever larger share of the social and political landscape. As the most powerful earthly patron of churches, Charlemagne loosely controlled the whole, growing enterprise. This might be a crude arrangement from the perspective of more bureaucratically ordered societies, but by the standards of the time this was an ingenious, pragmatic way to craft a working central order.

Chapter 4

REACTION AND RESISTANCE

The renegotiation of *precariae* in the eighth century echoed throughout the Frankish world in a number of disputes. The *precaria verbo regis*, through which Carolingian rulers reconciled networks of property holders to the imperatives of royal lordship, in time elicited criticisms of abuse from prelates; and the monks' imposition of rents, which revamped their relationship to precarists, almost immediately aroused the opposition of traditional patrons. Such strains should hardly be surprising. Any period of political consolidation was bound to be disruptive as local patterns were redirected to the political centre. These flash-points are instructive because they shed light on the processes of centralization in early medieval Europe, on the methods by which a general political order might be constructed from local institutional networks. At Murbach in southern Alsace, where monks complained about the loss of property to royal agents, and at Weissenburg to the north, where patrons contested precarial rents, we can observe in detail the alignment of local power with an assertive Carolingian authority.

THE RECEPTION OF THE *PRECARIA VERBO REGIS*

By the late eighth century, many monasteries and churches were concerned that royal retainers endowed with *precariae verbo regis* would look to the ruler as the source of their grants and neglect to honour ecclesiastical rights. This was a noticeable change in attitude from the early eighth century when, if the absence of concrete complaints in the contemporary record is any indication, such worries had not yet arisen.¹ Within a generation or two of the Council of Estinnes, clerics began to complain about the loss of property due to the *precaria verbo regis*. The lag between

¹ See above, chapter 3, p. 77, n. 2.

Estinnes and documented criticisms of the practice suggests that problems appeared only as royal *precariae* were granted out over a period of decades. Charlemagne tried to address the issue, specifying compensation and urging parties at Herstal to keep better track of claims by recording transactions. When these measures failed to resolve festering disputes, Charlemagne was besought to curb alleged abuses on a case-by-case basis.

Sometime in the late eighth century the abbot of Murbach approached Charlemagne to complain that properties granted out to Carolingian supporters during the Alemannic revolt of the 740s were slipping from the monastery's control. The accusations are preserved in Murbach's formulas, in two *indicula ad regem* for redress of grievances. In the first *indiculum*, Abbot Amico (774–87) asserted that 'your count named so-and-so deprived and divested us of properties, namely concerning those which we, with the protection of the Lord, were seen to have been invested by your ancestor and father and by you, through your piety up to now'.² In the second *indiculum*, drafted sometime between 774 and 800, but probably during Amico's abbacy, Murbach requested that Charlemagne restore control of labourers lost to the monastery as a result of the 'disturbance between Alsace and Alemannia'.³ The monastery alleged that many of the *mancipia*, who were bound by sacred right to the monastery, 'have evaded proper service and some now claim that they are freedmen; and the men of the count and other men in other counties withhold others, claiming that they hold them in your benefice'.

The first complaint clarifies that Charlemagne and his father Pippin had awarded property – albeit property that they had given to Murbach – to their count, or counts, in the area. The second reveals that the Carolingians also had made use of resources acquired by Murbach from other sources, in that the *indiculum* does not claim that the rights over the disputed *mancipia* were royal in origin. Both indicate that these awards had sown a good deal of confusion about the origin of the grants. The first *indiculum* basically accuses the count of having usurped church property, although we might infer, in light of the second *indiculum*, that holders of these *precariae verbo regis* believed the king was the author, rather than the mediator, of the grant. The problems apparently had become systemic, hence the need to couch the complaint as a formula that could be applied to future episodes.

It is possible that the recipients of these royal *precariae* unscrupulously appropriated properties that they knew full well belonged to Murbach. On the other hand, the *indicula* imply that these grants had been passed on

² *Formulae Alsaticae* 1: *Formulae Morbacenses*, in *Formulae Merowingici*, pp. 329–38, no. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, no. 5.

to a second generation of precarists who honestly could have been ignorant of the original agreement. The fact that the first *indiculum* implicates Pippin, and that the second traces disputes over *mancipia* to troubles in Alemannia, points to grants made originally during Pippin's and Carloman's suppression of Alemannia in the 740s. The passage of thirty to forty years, and Charlemagne's implied reconfirmation of the grants, would have reinforced a tendency among the precarists to associate the bestowals with the king.

The second complaint makes it clear enough that Pippin and Carloman must have awarded their supporters with some of Murbach's labourers, presumably (in conformity with the prescriptions of the Council of Estinnes) as field hands to work the farms of those recruited to fight Alemans. It could be that the fog of rebellion allowed *mancipia* to escape or be appropriated from monastic control, as is known to have happened with slaves and freedmen in the roughly contemporaneous revolts in Provence.⁴ The Alemannic revolt, which must have left Murbach's operations in a state of disarray when Abbot Romanus was forced to flee in the face of an Alemannic incursion into Alsace in 744, could have tempted some aristocrats to seize any lordless *mancipia*. Be that as it may, the monastery's complaints lodged in the second *indiculum* were provoked in part by claims made by the *mancipia* themselves. The *indiculum* reveals that some of the *mancipia* thought they were now freedmen, an assertion which indicates that they believed they, or perhaps their fathers, had been liberated from servitude at the time of the Alemannic revolt. Had they been freed by Carolingian rulers desperate for armed retainers to suppress the uprising? Or, if they had not been formally emancipated, did these *mancipia* feel their military service had made them free? In the ninth century Charlemagne's grandson Louis the German was accused of having armed unfree peasants in a bid to challenge his father Louis the Pious in Alemannia, an indication that the practice was not unthinkable.⁵

Finally, the *indicula* reveal that dissatisfaction with royal grants of monastic property was voiced only after several decades, in the last quarter of the eighth century. Murbach's experience with the *precaria verbo regis* was similar to that of monasteries elsewhere in the Frankish world where disputes surfaced only after a generation or two. St Victor at Marseilles, for example, also had lost property to royal supporters during Pippin's reign. Patrick Geary has used the episode to demonstrate that 'secularizations' occurred in Provence not under Charles Martel, but during the

⁴ Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence*, p. 126.

⁵ *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Félix Grat, Jeanne Vielliard and Suzanne Clémencet (Paris, 1964), a. 832, pp. 5–6.

reign of his son Pippin.⁶ We simply note here that according to Geary's investigation the monastery complained not during Pippin's reign, but only decades later when Bishop Maurontus brought his case before Charlemagne, probably at Herstal in 779.⁷

Ian Wood has examined another fascinating case at St Wandrille which transpired during Charles Martel's reign. The account of the episode is admittedly late, having been recounted in the *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii*, which was composed around 840 (or shortly before, perhaps between 823 and 833),⁸ but the author made use of the monastery's earlier records and thus appears faithfully to have reproduced at least the facts of grants made by earlier abbots of St Wandrille.⁹ According to the *Gesta*, in the 730s Abbot Teutsind granted an array of precarial properties to a certain Count Ratharius and, in Wood's estimation, angered his monks in the process.¹⁰ Whether the grant was instigated by Charles Martel is unclear. Wood thinks not, but when we consider that the property was fiscal in origin, that the count was one of Charles Martel's followers and that Teutsind was a Pippinid appointee,¹¹ there are good grounds for believing that Charles Martel was at least apprised of the situation. Wood perceptively reasons that the monks were offended because the abbot had awarded the property to someone with whom the monks had no previous relationship.¹² Their fears appear to have been justified, because the properties did eventually slip from the abbey's control when rent payments lapsed during the tenure of one of Teutsind's successors, Witlaic (754–87).

It is debatable whether monks in the 730s would have been scandalized by Ratharius's *precaria*. As we have seen, monasteries in the early eighth century used a *census* to distinguish traditional precarists, who were not required to pay rent, from those who had little or no connection to the property they received. Ratharius fits the latter profile, and Teutsind required a *census* of him. Moreover, although the author of this *Gesta* might have drawn upon the monastery's archival records to acquaint himself with details of earlier transactions, it is doubtful that he also had culled from the archives the emotions of long-dead monks and faithfully transmitted their 'eighth-century attitudes toward *precaria*'.¹³ Since the author had set out to rate the abbots on their ability to increase and defend the monastery's property, and since the author knew that the holders had

⁶ Geary, 'Die Provence', pp. 388–9. ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 386–7.

⁸ Wattenbach, Wilhelm, and Wilhelm Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: Vorzeit und Karolinger I: Die Vorzeit von den Anfängen bis zur Herrschaft der Karolinger* (Weimar, 1952), pp. 344–5; Pascal Pradié ed., French trans. and commentary, *Chronique des abbés de Fontenelle (Saint-Wandrille)*, Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen âge 40 (Paris, 1999), p. xxvii.

⁹ Wood, 'Teutsind', p. 35. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 44–7. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–42, 47–51. ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

indeed stopped paying the rent – a lapse that the monks in the 730s hardly could have foreseen, it is most likely that the disapproving tone expresses the mood of the author's own day when Teutsind's and Witlaic's behaviour had become retroactively scandalous. A more defensible chronology of outrage would assign denunciations of Teutsind's grant and Witlaic's inattention to rents to the last quarter of the eighth century at the earliest, presumably only after Witlaic had safely passed from the scene (787). Indeed, this pattern of initial acquiescence to these kinds of grant, the subsequent confusion of claims and later criticism closely matches the fate of royal *precariae* at Murbach and St Victor.

Monasteries might attribute problems to usurpation, alienation or theft at the hands of corrupt counts or abbots, but we can hardly trust such charges as straightforward depictions of malfeasance, not simply because such complaints were ideologically charged and self-serving, but because *precariae verbo regis* in the end were inherently ambiguous. It is impossible to determine whether the beneficiaries of royal-munificence-at-the-expense-of-monasteries knew the ultimate source of property granted to them. Many knowingly might have seized land or servants in bald violation of ecclesiastical rights. On the other hand, one can easily imagine that those so endowed would have looked to the ruler as the lord of their benefices, rather than to the monastery. None of these problems could have been anticipated. The *precaria verbo regis* appeared to be a brilliant method for reconciling at once a number of interests: kings tapped a vast resource with which to endow supporters, lay lords received compensation for their service and provisions were made to protect ecclesiastical rights. The confusions that arose in the late eighth century incited a number of disputes, but these ultimately enhanced the position of the ruler, to whose judgement the parties would have to appeal to settle any conflicts that they could not resolve among themselves.

THE PRECARIAL CENSUS AT WEISSENBURG

The first complaints about the *precaria verbo regis* in the late eighth century coincided with the proliferation of the *census* on ecclesiastical *precariae*. As we have seen, many monasteries renegotiated traditional precarial contracts in the last quarter of the eighth century, in most cases shortly after Herstal. On the one hand, it would be too simplistic to conclude that monasteries simply enforced the royal will, because Charlemagne's decrees probably were issued in response to provincial complaints, as for example those brought to his attention by St Victor of Marseilles and Murbach. On the other hand, from these specific cases was elaborated a general decree which then could be adapted by other institutions either to confront similar problems or to

restructure local relationships. At each monastery the initiative to impose rents on ordinary precarists was shaped by the complex interplay of shrewd leadership, local support, royal leverage and an opportune moment.

At Weissenburg, the person who could harness this potent combination of factors, and thus the wherewithal to revise the terms of precarial grants, was Abbot Ermbert, who had risen to favour under Pippin. In 764, Ermbert acquired, along with the abbacy of Weissenburg (764–93), the episcopacy of the prestigious diocese of Worms, where the most frequented Carolingian palace was located. That year, at the general assembly in Worms, the rising Ermbert received confirmation of the diocese's immunity and won from Pippin an immunity for Weissenburg.¹⁴ If the incidence of royal visits is any guide, Ermbert's influence reached its apogee under Pippin's son. During the first two and a half decades of Charlemagne's reign, the palace at Worms seems to have served as the fixed residence of the king's court until it was eclipsed by Aachen.¹⁵ As the ecclesiastical host, Ermbert must have played an influential part in the great assemblies at Worms that handled the most pressing challenges facing the Carolingians: the conquests of Bavaria, Saxony and the Avars;¹⁶ and many of the gravest internal episodes of Charlemagne's reign – the succession dispute with Carloman (770–1),¹⁷ Charlemagne's third marriage to the controversial Fastrada (783)¹⁸ and the foiling of the formidable east Frankish conspiracy of 786.¹⁹ Although Charlemagne was bound to visit Worms less frequently when Aachen became the preferred residence of both king and court in the 790s, it may say something of Ermbert's eminence that Charlemagne stopped visiting Worms at about the same time the bishop died (793). Other than a brief stopover in 803, the royal itinerary does not mention another visit after 791.²⁰

¹⁴ The grant to Worms is undated, but the diet of 764 is the most probable date; see Mühlbacher's discussion of the diploma, *MGH D Karol.* vol. I, no. 20, pp. 28–9; and *Regesta Imperii 1: Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern 751–918*, ed. Johann Böhrmer, rev. by Engelbert Mühlbacher and Johann Lechner, 2nd edn (Innsbruck, 1908; reprint: Hildesheim, 1966), 98 d. The immunity for Weissenburg is known from Otto II's diploma of 967, *Diplomata Ottonis II*, no. 15.

¹⁵ Florentine Mutherich, 'Die Erneuerung der Buchmalerei am Hof Karls des Grossen', in Christoph Stiegemann und Matthias Wemhoff eds., *799, Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn: Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung, Paderborn 1999* (Mainz, 1999), pp. 560–609, esp. p. 561.

¹⁶ Cf. *ARF* a. 764, p. 22; 772, pp. 32, 34; 776, p. 46; 779, p. 54; 781, p. 58; 783, pp. 46, 66; 784, p. 68; 787, pp. 76, 78; 790, p. 87; 791, pp. 87, 89.

¹⁷ Carloman took refuge at Seltz in Alsace with his mother Bertrada, about 20 miles southeast of Weissenburg, *ibid.*, a. 770, p. 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 783, p. 66.

¹⁹ *Annales Nazariani*, ed. Walter Lendi, in Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik*, a. 786, pp. 159–63; cf. also *ARF*, a. 785, p. 71.

²⁰ *Regesta Imperii 1*, 405 b.

Equipped with royal favour and impressive privileges from Pippin to prove it, Ermbert was well positioned to reshape the way Weissenburg conducted business with its patrons. These advantages would have done the abbot-bishop little good had they not been supplemented with substantial local support. The name *Ermbertus* is attested infrequently in the Weissenburg charters but does appear in the late seventh century among the Wolfoald-Gundoins. This provoked Karl Glöckner to propose kinship to that group, or to the Rodoins, but the connection is tenuous, based as it is solely on the coincidence of a name that appeared nearly a century earlier.²¹ Ermbert actually appears to have been an outsider, albeit one who was connected to a regional nexus of Franconian families that overlapped with groups traditionally attached to Weissenburg. He may in part have been an attractive candidate for the abbacy on account of his origins among the Rupertings, an influential mid-Rhine family.²² His roots in the mid-Rhine region probably explain Ermbert's appointment as bishop of Worms, his concurrent association with Lorsch, a monastery closely associated with the Carolingians, and his closeness to the so-called Ratbald-Wicbald patrons of Weissenburg, a group well endowed with property throughout the Wormsgau, Speyergau and northern Alsace, and probably related to families associated with Lorsch and Fulda.²³

The Ratbald-Wicbalds formed a pillar of Ermbert's support at Weissenburg. The group precipitated out of a cluster of families once connected to Weissenburg through the Etichonids, for whom both a certain Ratbald and a certain Wicbald appear as witnesses in several late Merovingian transactions, in some instances for Duke Liutfrid himself.²⁴ Neither appears in extant charters as a donor, although both were part of a circle of associates which included a certain Rantwig, who in 736/7 purchased from Liutfrid an array of properties throughout northern and southern Alsace and then gave many of them to Weissenburg in an extensive donation of 742.²⁵ Ratbald and Wicbald witnessed both transactions; and Ratbald and Rantwig witnessed the donation of a certain Nordoald, who in turn was witness to three of Liutfrid's donations.²⁶

²¹ Glöckner, 'Anfänge', p. 18. On similar grounds, Joachim Jahn proposed kinship to Bishop Ermbert of Freising, a connection which is even less likely, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum: Die Bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger* (Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 151–2.

²² Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 186–7; and Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 55–9.

²³ On the Ratbald-Wicbalds see Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 84–5 and map 9; and Willi Alter, 'Studien zur mittelalterlichen Siedlungs- und Volksgeschichte der mittleren Vorderpfalz: II. Teil: Die in den Klosterkodizes genannten Personen, insbesondere die Angehörigen der Familie Ratbald-Wicbald', *Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereins der Pfalz* 57 (1959), pp. 39–135.

²⁴ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 2 (Wicbald, 742), 13 (Ratbald, 734), 17 (Ratbald, 739), 35, 162 (Ratbald and Wicbald, 736/7) and 136 (Wicbald, 745).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 35, 162, 52. ²⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 17, 159, 10, 11, 13.

Rantwig may have been related to Ratbald and Wichald, because a generation later we find another Rantwig, presumably a descendant of the donor Rantwig, as a witness in charters of the 770s and 780s next to Ratbald's son Sigibald and Wichald's sons Richbald and Gerbald.²⁷ That is, with the possible exception of Rantwig, who may have been a relative, the early family did not patronize Weissenburg but played supporting roles in transactions made by the dominant ducal family or by those close to the duke.

The next generation began to step forward in their own right when Etichonid power withered under Pippin's benign disfavour and shortly after Ermbert became abbot in 764. In 765/6, Richbald and Gerbald donated property in northern Alsace and the Speyergau for the souls of their parents Wichald and Beda; and in 773, Sigibald made an extensive donation of properties in northern Alsace, the Speyergau and Wormsgau for his parents Ratbald and Atta-Angilswind.²⁸ Striking is the burst of activity between 774 and 776, a period that coincided with Charlemagne's major offensives into Italy and Saxony, leaving one to wonder if the three weren't making provisions for the afterlife.²⁹ After 784 the pace slowed, either because they were running out of property to give or because of the deaths of the principal donors: Gerbald had died by 788, when Winiart, Ratram and Wilo, presumably his sons, made a donation for his soul; and Sigibald last appears in 787 as a witness.³⁰ Sigibald apparently died shortly thereafter, because he did not appear to witness Richbald's last donations in 789/90 and 797.³¹ In all, members of the kin-group were responsible for well over one-third of the charters recorded in the cartulary for the years 764 to 800.³² This made them by far the most heavily represented group among Weissenburg's patrons in the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 64, 70, 74, 75, 90, 111. Codicological evidence also is suggestive: Rantwig's donation charter was entered into the cartulary immediately before a string of seventeen transactions later made by Sigibald, Gerbald and Richbald (*ibid.*, nos. 53–70, except no. 69; Sigibald, nos. 53–9; Gerbald, nos. 60, 61 and 67; Richbald, nos. 62–4, 70; and Gerbald and Richbald, 65 and 66). His donation introduces many of the same places found in these ensuing charters as if to provide a context for Sigibald's, Gerbald's and Richbald's donations (Preuschof, nos. 53, 64, 66; Kutzenhausen, no. 60; Dauendorf, nos. 53, 60, 63; Uhlweiler, nos. 60, 63).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 66, 53, 178.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 53, 178, 54, 55, 57, 58, 61, 63, 67, 65. Three others, nos. 56, 70, 88, may have been donated at this time but can be dated only imprecisely to the decade between 774 and 784.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 102, 83. ³¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 64, 68.

³² As authors of transactions, they were responsible for *ibid.*, nos. 53–68, 70, 128, 153, 155, 178, 188 and 189; and as witnesses, they appeared in nos. 27, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 83, 88, 89, 90, 98, 101, 102, 106, 108, 110, 111, 113, 116, 117, 119, 121, 125, 130, 154, 190. If we add Sigibald's wife Liutswind, no. 87, the number swells to 51 of the 121 charters recorded in the cartulary for the years 764 to 800.

last third of the eighth century, a period that witnessed the greatest acceleration in gifts to the monastery.

We might infer that Ermbert, who technically came from outside the narrow circles of Weissenburg's patrons, courted the family's patronage to establish a basis of support. The family's willingness to donate so lavishly to Weissenburg does seem to have been inspired in part by their unusually warm relationship with the abbot. Richbald and Sigibald appeared together with Ermbert to witness the donation of a church in Dauendorf by a certain Ado.³³ From other charters we can glean that Richbald must have been one of Ermbert's monks, and an especially prominent one too, having negotiated the purchase of property for the monastery on two occasions: in 780 he purchased property in Strasburg from a certain Alderich for 'that holy monastery'; and in 787 he purchased some property in Lembach from a certain Engilbert, who had already sold half his property in Lembach the year before to Ermbert's on-the-spot abbot, Godabert.³⁴ Ermbert himself showed a particular fondness for the family when, upon the death of Sigibald's spouse Liutswind, he took property that she had donated some years before and personally rededicated it for the sake of her soul.³⁵

The catalyst for Ermbert's initiative to impose rents on *precaria* at Weissenburg may have been the east Frankish conspiracy hatched by unspecified Thuringian nobles in 785/6, the greatest challenge ever posed to Charlemagne's rule from within. The chronology is imprecise, although, on the basis of the testimony of the *Royal Frankish Annals*, the plot was discovered in 785, and then, on the basis of other accounts, suppressed sometime before August 786, when Charlemagne convened an assembly at Worms in part to deal with the apprehended conspirators.³⁶ Böhmer and Mühlbacher situated the suppression of the plot between Easter (23 April) and late June 786; however, there is nothing to speak against a thwarting of the conspiracy in the months before Easter. Since the ever-ambitious Charlemagne was unlikely to have sat on the information for long, he might have moved against the conspirators as early as the winter of 785–6 or spring of 786. In any case, the plot and its suppression closely coincide with the last unburdened *precaria* at Weissenburg, which dates to November 785, and the first two burdened *precaria*, which date to April and May 786.³⁷

Had some of Weissenburg's patrons participated in the conspiracy and literally paid for it with the imposition of rents? Karl Brunner has implicated Alsace in the revolt because the entry for 786 in the *Annales*

³³ *Ibid.*, no. 71. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 153, 155, 157. ³⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 87. ³⁶ *Regesta Imperii* 1, 270 c.

³⁷ *Trad. Witz.*, nos. 206 (8 April) and 101 (9 May).

Nazariani, which come to us in a late eighth-century manuscript written in a hand from Murbach, is the most discursive of otherwise discreet accounts; and because the families of Charlemagne's nearby Alemannic counts appear, on the basis of a complicated prosopographical reconstruction, to have had links to Thuringian nobles.³⁸ The proposed connections, it should be said, are tenuous, and since there is no evidence that Weissenburg's patrons were involved in the conspiracy, it would strain matters to see in the *census* a punitive measure directly connected to the uprising. The manuscript of the *Annales Nazariani* does show a break after the entry for 785, apparently signalling the end of a rescension and perhaps the intrusion of larger events.³⁹ The same hand resumes on the next folio, and the lively entries that now follow were supplemented by someone with a taste for, and a familiarity with, controversy: the conspiracy (786), the suppression of Duke Tassilo in Bavaria (787, 788) and the defeat of Dragowit, king of the Wiltzi (789).⁴⁰ The last entry was for 791 and contained no news but rather a plaintive prayer about mortality for recital on the ember days of September.⁴¹

Brunner suggests that the entries up to 788 probably were entered under Abbot Amico (774–89), who, although faithful to the Carolingian house, was, like his two predecessors, connected to old Alemannic, Franconian and Bavarian families. This would explain, he reasons, the generally loyal tone of the entries but also their willingness to divulge the grievances of opponents. When Amico was succeeded by Sindbert, the bishop of Regensburg (756–91), in 789, the political orientation of Murbach 'did not essentially change'.⁴² The prosopographical connections again are not always convincing, and even if we were to accept them, we might question the underlying assumption that the 'political tendency' of Murbach can be inferred from prosopographical analysis and be considered relatively stable for decades. Other than their overall loyalty to the Carolingians, the sympathies of the abbots of Murbach are difficult to fathom. Nonetheless, there are good reasons to believe that the interpolations in the *Annales Nazariani* were made under Sindbert. The entries appear to have been written by a contemporary, so it seems unlikely that the expansions only up to 788 were composed under Amico.⁴³ The annals

³⁸ Karl Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Vienna, 1979), pp. 46–52; Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik*, pp. 93–4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 113–14.

⁴⁰ *Annales Nazariani*, a. 786–91, pp. 159–67; cf. Karl Brunner, 'Auf den Spuren verlorener Traditionen', *Peritia* 2 (1983), pp. 1–22.

⁴¹ Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik*, p. 94.

⁴² Brunner, 'Auf den Spuren', pp. 17–19.

⁴³ Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik*, p. 114.

also share a common source with the *Annales Alamannici* and the *Annales Guelpherbytani* down to 789,⁴⁴ and therefore we might assume that the expansions were interpolated by the same individual probably in that year, or in 790, which would place them during Sindbert's abbacy (789–91). As the bishop of the prestigious diocese of Regensburg, Sindbert surely was knowledgeable about the Carolingian court and east Frankish affairs in general, and about events in Bavaria in particular. We know precious little of his career, but the *Royal Frankish Annals* do reveal that the bishop cooperated with Charlemagne in an attempt to bring Tassilo to heel in 781 at Quierzy,⁴⁵ reason enough to conclude that he was a well-placed witness. A final clue that ties Sindbert to the expansions introduced into the *Annales Nazariani* may be found in the last entry for 791, which was written by a 'slightly later hand from the same scriptorium'.⁴⁶ When we consider that Sindbert died that year during the autumn campaign against the Avars,⁴⁷ we might surmise that his passing had inspired someone to enter the concluding autumn ember-days prayer. Why Sindbert should have wanted to elaborate on the affairs of 786–9 is impossible to know for certain, but one suspects that he wanted to rationalize what must have been in some eyes his controversial decision to collaborate with the Carolingian regime.

Let it suffice to say that Weissenburg's precarists, had they been involved in the revolt of 785/6, would have paid for it with their lives rather than *denarii*, or at least a few limbs which would have made signing their charters impossible. It is more likely that the events of 786, having strengthened Charlemagne's grip and, by extension, the local positions of agents such as Ermbert, provided an opportune moment for the abbot-bishop to clarify, and thus essentially redefine, Weissenburg's rights vis à vis its patrons. Having already cultivated strong local support among the Ratbald-Wicbald family, Ermbert was well positioned to renegotiate the monastery's relationship to its families.

OPPOSITION TO THE PRECARIAL CENSUS: THE CASE
OF THE RODOINS

Ermbert's initiative provoked Weissenburg's most constant patron family, the Rodoins, to contest the monks' right to assess rents. The record of the conflict, which erupted around 788 shortly after the monastery began to burden *precariae*, accuses the family of having wrongfully held monastic property. A careful exposition of the relevant documents

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 113–17. ⁴⁵ *ARF*, a. 781, pp. 58, 59.

⁴⁶ Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik*, p. 167, n. b. ⁴⁷ *Regesta Imperii* I, 316 c.

will show that Ermbert and his monks ignited the dispute when they demanded direct control of a third portion of the family's precarial forest in Waldhambach. The conflict then intensified when two brothers, Rodoin and Gebhart, challenged Ermbert's attempt to attach unprecedented financial obligations to the precarial properties at Waldhambach and Berg that the family had been holding from the monastery for at least four generations. (The relevant documents are summarized in table 5.)

Table 5. *Rodoin donations and precariae at Waldhambach and Berg*

[*Donation*, ante 27 June 717]

- Property in Waldhambach
- Property of church of St Martin in Berg including clerics and the forest Ego

Rodoin's precaria

(27 June 717; *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 196)

- Rodoin confirms gift of property in Waldhambach
- Rodoin confirms gift of property in Berg, including clerics and the forest Ego
- + Rodoin receives usufruct of properties for life

Rodoin's testament

(3 February 718; *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 227)

- Rodoin gives property in Waldhambach, plus his half-portion of forest, two clerics, twenty-six dependants and their children, and cows
- Rodoin gives property in Berg, which his ancestors bestowed upon the church of St Martin
- + Rodoin reserves for himself and heirs his villa at Tieffenbach
- + Rodoin requests that his name be written into the book of the dead

Rodoin's revised testament

(13 February 718; *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 194, 224)

- Rodoin gives all his property at Berg
- Rodoin gives all his property at eight other villages (Durstel, Tieffenbach, Wachbach, Watinausa, Altdorf, Barville, Blâmont, Vingibergus)

Rodoin's revised precaria

(18 May 718; *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 195)

- Rodoin confirms gift of property in Waldhambach, his half-portion of forest, two clerics and dependants given in his first testament
- Rodoin confirms donation of Tieffenbach in the revised testament
- Rodoin confirms donation of property in Berg at the church of St Martin in the revised testament
- + Rodoin requests that he be written in the book of the dead
- + Weissenburg grants the properties to Rodoin for life-long usufruct

Gebhart's precaria

(21 March 726/7; *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 257)

- Gebhart acknowledges that his father gave properties at Waldhambach and Berg
- + Weissenburg grants them in benefice to Gebhart who holds them under life-long usufruct

Reaction and resistance

Table 5. (cont.)

Rodoin and Gebahart's precaria (Trad. Wiz., no. 197)

[*precaria*, before 31 January 788]

- Rodoin and Gebahart admit unjust seizure of property in Waldhambach
- + Weissenburg grants the properties back to the brothers
- Weissenburg reserves a third-share of the forest, Balger and his son, and Balger's property, so that the monastery's men and servants be able to use the forest for building and for grazing pigs
- + Weissenburg grants to the brothers the *census* that other men, but not the monastery's men, must pay

[*prestaria*, 31 January 788]

- + Weissenburg grants property at Berg to Rodoin and Gebahart
- Rodoin and Gebahart are required to perform a labour service or pay twenty *solidi* yearly to Weissenburg
- Rodoin and Gebahart are required to pay five *solidi* yearly for life-long usufruct of property in Waldhambach

Judgement for Weissenburg

(undated; Trad. Wiz., no. 196a)

1. Rodoin gave properties in Berg and the forest in Waldhambach to Weissenburg
2. Rodoin and Gebahart did not want to hold them justly
3. Otacar delegated the case to Althelm, who ruled in Weissenburg's favour

Rodoin and Gebahart's donation of 807

(28 August 807; Trad. Wiz., no. 199)

- Rodoin and Gebahart gave property in Godramstein for Rodung's soul
 - + In return they received in *precaria* property in Waldhambach (minus the forest) and Berg which their father had received in benefice.
-
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Vestiges of the dispute appear in three documents from the Weissenburg codex: a precarial charter dated to 31 January 788 (see [appendix](#)), a presterial statement attached to a donation made by Rodoin and Gebahart in 807, and an undated summary of a judgement against the brothers.⁴⁸ The charter of 788 was entered into the cartulary as 'the *precaria* of Rodoin and his brother Gebahart', although it actually includes not only Rodoin and Gebahart's *precaria*, which records the brothers' submission to the monastery and their subsequent request for use of the disputed properties, but also, after a gap of one and half lines, the monastery's *prestaria*, which records the monks' agreement to the request and the conditions of the lease. In the *precaria*, Rodoin and Gebahart confess that they, and a third brother Lantfrit, the sons of a certain Eburhard, had held the properties, which their ancestors had given

⁴⁸ Trad. Wiz., nos. 197, 196a, 199.

to Weissenburg, without the assent and against the wish of the monks. After Lantfrit's death they felt remorseful and approached Abbot Ermbert. They returned the properties to the abbot and monks, and petitioned that the monastery 'grant some portion of that property' to them. In the *prestaria*, Ermbert granted the brothers the properties at Berg, in return for either a labour service or rent. Then, in reference to the properties in Waldhambach, he and the monks also granted the brothers 'these properties, next to that [forest] which we set aside above', so long as the brothers paid an annual *census* on the feast of St Martin. Upon the brothers' deaths, the properties were to revert to the monastery without the interference of any judge. This was followed in 807 by another presterial grant to Rodoin and Gebahart of the properties in Waldhambach and Berg 'with the exception of that forest'.

From the record of the undated judgement, we know that the monastery at some point took its case to a higher authority, to a certain Otacar, 'who does justice at the palace'. Otacar delegated the case to a certain Althelm and ordered 'that he look into what was to be done'. The document lists over thirty witnesses who testified that the property which 'Rodoin handed over to the monastery Weissenburg afterwards reverted to our control with all these witnesses being present', and that Rodoin's *fili*i, Rodoin and Gebahart, 'did not want to hold [it] justly, as is plainly expressed in the document'. 'This is the forest between the Eichel and Mittlibrunn, and that church in *monte*, which is called Berg and whatever half pertains to it in *mancipii*, etc.'

At first glance the dispute appears to be very simple. The three brothers had usurped properties that their ancestor Rodoin had given Weissenburg; the monks contested the appropriation, took the case to a higher authority and received a favourable ruling. The brothers then submitted to the judgement, the results of which are reflected in Rodoin and Gebahart's *precaria* and Ermbert's *prestaria* of 788. This is the conclusion of Karl Glöckner and Anton Doll, the editors of the cartulary, who date the court case to two or three years before the brothers' capitulation in 788.⁴⁹ The second presterial statement attached to the brothers' donation in 807 must represent, they reason, a renewal of the precarial/presterial arrangements of 788. Although precarial tenures usually were awarded for life, the brothers presumably had to renew their tenure because of their disputatious behaviour.⁵⁰

This was not a simple dispute between a monastery and a family out to recoup property alienated by ancestors. The history of the properties and

⁴⁹ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 402–3. ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

the inconsistencies in the *precaria/prestaria* of 788 point rather to Weissenburg's determination to impose a *census* on precarial property and thereby to revise a traditional relationship that the family had no intention of breaking. The charters of the brothers' ancestors clarify that the properties the brothers had been holding 'unjustly' had been retained by the family in *precaria* at least since 717. In that year the brothers' progenitor, Rodoin son of Peter, donated and then received them back in *precaria*.⁵¹ His donation charter was not preserved, but from his *precaria* we learn that his gift had included *manses*, houses, fields, meadows, churches, pastures, forests, *mancipia*, clerics and water, and the adjoining forest *Ego*. At Berg on 27 June 717, the monastery granted him life-long usufruct of these properties as well as the properties joined to the church of St Martin at Berg; in return, Rodoin acknowledged that all were to revert to the monastery after his death. Rodoin's will, established the following February at the nearby village of Asswiller, reveals that the property in Waldhambach, including Rodoin's half-portion of forest – presumably the same forest called *Ego* – was situated between the Eichel and Mittlibrunn rivers, and between Lake Chudulfus near the Eichel and land already donated by Werald (of the Wolfoald-Gundoin group).⁵² Among the possessions handed over to the monastery were two priests and twenty-six *mancipia* and their children and cattle, although Rodoin withheld for himself and his heirs his newly built villa at Tieffenbach. In addition 'at Monte, which is called Berg', Rodoin gave the portion of property 'which my ancestors and I myself had affirmed at the church of St Martin'. As we observed in chapter 2, the properties at Berg had not originally been donated by Rodoin, but rather earlier by his ancestors, so that in 717 Rodoin had only received them in usufruct. In return, Rodoin asked that the monks pray for him and enter his name into the 'book of life'. The will was reworked ten days later and expanded to include donations made in other villages and the new villa at Tieffenbach; and then, in May 718, his *precaria* for properties in Waldhambach and Berg was renegotiated to include those in Tieffenbach.⁵³

The properties at Waldhambach and Berg passed by precarial grant in 726 to his son Gebhart⁵⁴ and thence to Eburhart. Eburhart's *precaria* has not survived, but the prestarial statement attached to Rodoin and Gebhart's gift of 807 indicates that Eburhart had held the properties under the same conditions as Gebhart, in that it contrasts the father's terms with those of his two sons: Rodoin and Gebhart reportedly were to receive the property in Waldhambach and Berg their father had held,

⁵¹ *Trad. Witz.*, no. 196. ⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 227. ⁵³ *Ibid.*, nos. 194, 224, 195. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 257.

‘except that forest’, a reference to the third-portion of the forest in the dispute of 788.⁵⁵ Because *precaria*e normally were valid for the duration of a precarist’s life, Ermbert must have altered the conditions upon Eburhart’s death and removed the forest property from the grant when the sons approached the monastery for permission to resume the grant.

Thus by the 780s, the properties at Waldhambach and Berg had been held continuously by the family for generations, and Lantfrit, Rodoin and Gebahart reasonably could have expected to receive them after the manner of their forefathers. It would appear that when Ermbert and the monks made known their intention to take direct control of the forest at Waldhambach that long had been part of the family’s traditional grant, the brothers reacted by retaining the complex of precarial properties at Waldhambach without the monastery’s formal permission, and in this sense ‘held it unjustly’. The brothers’ resolve seems to have disintegrated upon the death of Lantfrit. Had the monks refused to enter Lantfrit’s name in the ‘book of life’ alongside his ancestors? According to their joint *precaria*, the surviving brothers Rodoin and Gebahart confessed that ‘heartfelt remorse and great sadness’ (*compunctio cordis atque magnus meror*) had moved them to return the properties, ‘since no one is able to hold without your command and will those properties which our ancestors and fathers (*antecessores atque patres*) handed over freely and willingly to the monastery Weissenburg with valid witnesses’. With the help and aid of ‘good men’, they made a petition for the property and acknowledged that the monks charitably acceded ‘because our need was great’. They asked the monks to grant them whatever property lay between the Mittlibrunn river, the Eichel river, Ludolfesteich and Spitzstein, i.e. in Waldhambach, except for a third-share of the forest, as well as a certain Baldger and his son and whatever properties belonged to him. This portion of forest was reserved for the men (*homines*) and servants (*servi*) of the monastery to work, to build on or to graze pigs. In exchange for use of a third of the forest, the brothers agreed that the monastery should grant them a *census*.

The juxtaposition of Lantfrit’s death and Rodoin and Gebahart’s sudden remorse suggests that the brothers capitulated in the face of spiritual pressures. As investigations of more detailed accounts of medieval disputes have revealed, monks had at their disposal a variety of sacramental weapons they could bring to bear against disputants at critical moments in a family’s life cycle, especially death.⁵⁶ Evidently anxious about the fate of Lantfrit’s soul, the surviving brothers reconsidered their opposition when the monks withheld coveted spiritual gifts. Perhaps to

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 199. ⁵⁶ Geary, ‘Vivre en conflit’, pp. 1119–20.

ensure compliance and assuage any bad feelings, the monastery granted the brothers a *census* as compensation for the reduction in forest property. The brothers were to collect the *census* from Weissenburg, not from the tenants themselves, since the brothers specified that the monastery should grant them a *census*, 'which other men, but not your men, ought to pay'. The meaning of this terse provision is unclear. The most straightforward interpretation is that the brothers had been collecting *census* from the 'other men', but were not allowed to collect them from the monastery's men, presumably in conformity with royal privileges and immunities that exempted monastic possessions from lay jurisdiction. Consequently, the monks were willing to compensate the brothers but were intent on maintaining direct control over the collection of rents. When we consider that the brothers pointedly recognized that this third-share of forest land was reserved for the support of the monastery's men, it may be that the fundamental issue in the dispute was exclusive jurisdiction over the exploitation of tenants, rather than real estate per se.

The dispute might have ended with the brothers' capitulation over the forest, but the monastery pressed its advantage to assess a *census* not only on those properties in Waldhambach but also on those in Berg, both of which the Rodoins had held for generations as unburdened *precariae*. It may even have been that the monks contrived the dispute over the forest property at Waldhambach as part of their broader effort to impose precarial rents. At any rate, a second stage in the dispute is revealed by close scrutiny of Ermbert's *prestaria*, the conditions of which deviate strikingly from the brothers' *precaria*: whereas the *precaria* dealt only with the properties in Waldhambach, Ermbert suddenly laid down terms in the *prestaria* for both Waldhambach and Berg.⁵⁷ When we compare Ermbert's *prestaria* with the *precariae* of the brothers' ancestors, and indeed with the brother's own *precaria* – none of which mentions financial burdens – we can plainly see that Ermbert and his monks had abruptly demanded that the brothers pay an unprecedented *census* for the properties. The brothers now were required to pay a *census* of five *solidi* every year for use of the properties at Waldhambach, and to perform either a labour service – a transport from Waldhambach to Weissenburg – or pay twenty *denarii* in exchange for usufructuary rights to those at Berg.

It strikes one as suspicious that the document, as it is configured, has the brothers agreeing to a settlement whose financial obligations Ermbert and the monks unilaterally defined and witnessed. The charter of the brothers' *precaria* and the monastery's adjoining *prestaria* appears to have been drawn

⁵⁷ Trad. Wiz., no. 197.

up from two originally separate documents, the former having been composed by a crude stylist who tended to Romanize names and the latter by the notary Hildibodo, who commanded a plainer, more elegant style.⁵⁸ One also notices curious deviations from precarial form. By contrast with the *precaria* of their forebears, the brothers' *precaria* lacks both the statement that they requested the grant to be made and a list of supporting witnesses. Rather, a statement at the end of the presterial portion claims that the abbot-bishop Ermbert had ordered the *precaria*; and the witnesses who follow must have applied only to the presterial portion, because they appear to have been monks and partisans of the monastery.⁵⁹ Glöckner and Doll hypothesize that Ermbert spelled out the burdens because the purpose of a *prestaria* was to define financial obligations.⁶⁰ However, every other precarial charter preserved in the cartulary of Weissenburg that raises the issue of a *census* in return for a grant of usufruct specifies the amount required; and a review of the notarial formulas reveals that a *precaria* and its reciprocal *prestaria* were supposed to affirm the same set of conditions.⁶¹

The brothers' *precaria* and Ermbert's adjoining *prestaria* must refer to two phases in a lengthier dispute which began over the forest at Waldhambach and progressed to encompass Berg and the issue of rent. Because the summary of the judgement refers to Berg and Waldhambach, the court case must have transpired sometime after the brothers' submission in their *precaria*. The brothers' formal acknowledgement of guilt probably was used against them in the court case, since the summary of the judgement pointedly refers to their unjust possession of the properties 'as is plainly expressed in the document', i.e. in their *precaria*. I suspect that the monastery took its case to court after the brothers refused to agree to the conditions put forth in Ermbert's *prestaria* of 31 January 788. Glöckner and Doll concede on linguistic grounds that the summary of the judgement probably was drawn up well after the brothers' *precaria*, perhaps as late as 810, although they maintain that it probably recalls a decision handed down two to three years before the *prestaria* of 788. A later composition would account, they reason, for the notary's vague and inaccurate knowledge of the family, to wit his failure to mention the

⁵⁸ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 404. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 406, n. 3. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

⁶¹ Cf. *Marculfi Formulae*, bk 2, nos. 39/40; *Formulae Senonenses*, nos. 32/3; *Formulae Salicae Bignonianae*, nos. 21/2; *Formulae Salicae Merkelianae*, nos. 5/6, 7/8, 34/5, 36/7; *Formulae Salicae Lindenbrogianae*, nos. 3/4; *Formulae Augiensis: Collectio B*, nos. 2/3, 4/5, 6/7, 14/15; *Formulae Sangallenses Miscellaneae*, nos. 2/3, 14/15, 22/3; *Collectio Sangallensis*, nos. 6a/7, 8/9, 13/14; *Additamenta e codicibus Collectionis Sangallensis*, nos. 4/5. One counter example appears in the *Formulae Senonenses*, nos. 15/16, where a pair of precarial and presterial formulas do not harmonize on the point of financial burdens.

third brother, Lantfrit, and his mistaken reference to the other two, Rodoin and Gebahart, as sons (*fili*) of Rodoin, even though the *precaria* of 788 plainly mentions Lantfrit and identifies Eburhart as the father.⁶²

It remains to be explained how a notary, who had the precarial document at hand when he wrote the summary, as the editors themselves concede, ever could have been confused about the brothers' family. The brothers' *precaria* clearly identifies an Eburhart as the brothers' father and Lantfrit as the third brother, and fails to mention the more distant progenitor Rodoin, whom the summarizer paradoxically had no trouble recalling. The notary surely consulted the brothers' *precaria*, because he pointedly referred to the submission of Gebahart and Rodoin who 'did not want to hold [the properties] justly, as is plainly expressed in the document'. He also had at hand the charters of the brothers' ancestor Rodoin, because he opened with a pointed reference to Rodoin's original donation ('These are the witnesses of that property, which Rodoin handed over to the monastery Weissenburg'); and his description of the properties at Berg (*hoc est. . . illam ecclesiam in monte qui dicitur Berg*) betrays a literal reliance on Rodoin's will (*ad monte quod dicitur Berg*).⁶³

The notary's familiarity with the two documents explains his reference to Rodoin and Gebahart as the *fili* of Rodoin. He could see well enough that the brothers had submitted to the monastery and that they had returned properties they claimed their *antecessores atque patres* had handed over to Weissenburg. So he consulted the charters of their ancestor Rodoin, who had donated the properties at Waldhambach and confirmed an earlier donation of properties attached to the church at Berg made by his *antecessores*. For the summary, the notary only wanted to establish that the seminal donor, Rodoin, was the brothers' ancestor. Since *fili* can mean 'descendants', which is the most likely interpretation in light of the brothers' invocation of their 'ancestors and fathers', he simply must have meant that Rodoin and Gebhart were the lineal progeny of Rodoin.⁶⁴

We are not privy to the precise sequence of events, but the court case must have been advanced sometime after 788 and before 807, when the *prestaria* that year granted Rodoin and Gebahart the properties at Berg and Waldhambach, minus the forest. If the *Irambertus* listed among the witnesses in the summary can be identified with the abbot Ermbert, as Glöckner and Doll propose, we could posit a terminal date of January 793, when Ermbert died.⁶⁵ It is doubtful, however, that the witness *Irambertus*, who appears without title as the fourteenth witness in a pack of thirty-one witnesses, is Abbot Ermbert. Ermbert appears in many

⁶² Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 402–3. ⁶³ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 194.

⁶⁴ See above, chapter 2, p. 71. ⁶⁵ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 403, n. 5.

Weissenburg charters, and in none is his name reproduced as *Irambertus* or *Imbertus*. We also note that a witness *Imbertus* and Abbot Ermbert appeared together in a donation made to Weissenburg, demonstrating the existence of two distinct individuals contemporaneous with one another and bearing the names Ermbert and *Imbertus*.⁶⁶

There are better reasons to believe that the court case transpired closer to 807. The probable identities of Otacar, 'who does justice at the palace', and his delegate Althelm point to a later date. Glöckner and Doll propose that the Otacar mentioned in the summary might have been the same Otgar/Autgar who operated in the palace court of Pippin in 752.⁶⁷ If the case was heard around 786, as they prefer, one might expect to find traces of an Otacar dispensing justice at one of Charlemagne's palace courts in the 780s, especially if he had been at it for thirty-five years. However, it would have been impossible for him to have been serving as late as 786, because the Otgar of Pippin's court most likely was the same Otgar/Ottakar, *fidelis* of Charlemagne and donor to Fulda between 756 and 775, who died sometime before 779.⁶⁸ A royal diploma that year records Charlemagne's gift of property in the Wormsgau to Fulda which Otgar 'had held' (past tense) as a benefice from the king, implying that Otgar had by then died.⁶⁹

A more likely candidate for the Otacar in the summary is Otgar, the nephew of Archbishop Riculf of Mainz (787–813). This Otgar advanced to the royal court in the latter years of Charlemagne's reign and in time became the archbishop of Mainz (825–46), a chaplain to Louis the Pious and the abbot of Weissenburg (839–46).⁷⁰ If Riculf served as mentor to his nephew, as Josef Fleckenstein reasonably assumed,⁷¹ Otgar's ascent into royal service must have begun prior to Riculf's death in 813. An early career as a palace functionary would accord neatly with the summary of the judgement against Rodoin and Gebahart, which depicts Otacar as 'one who does justice at the palace', i.e. as a judge, not an archbishop. When Otgar later became abbot of Weissenburg, he appeared in three charters with an Adalhelm. In one dated to 840, Adalhelm and his brother Milo made a conditional gift to Otgar 'who ordered this grant (*prestaría*) to be made, drawn up and confirmed'.⁷² In the other two, Adalhelm and his brother witnessed a gift made in 846 to Weissenburg and the accompanying *precaria*, both of which were addressed to the abbot-bishop Otgar. In

⁶⁶ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 26, 105. ⁶⁷ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 403.

⁶⁸ See *D Karol.* vol. I, p. 177; and on Otakar's career, Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 61–5.

⁶⁹ *D Karol.* vol. I, no. 127.

⁷⁰ Alois Gerlich, 'Die Reichspolitik des Erzbischofs Otgar von Mainz', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 19 (1954), pp. 286–316; Josef Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige 1: Grundlegung: Die karolingische Hofkapelle*, MGH Schriften 16, 1 (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 58, 60, 94, 105.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94, n. 340. ⁷² *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 151.

these two charters, Adalhelm appears next to his brother Milo as 'Althelm'.⁷³ This Adalhelm/Althelm was a prominent figure among Weissenburg's circle of patrons. He appeared as donor or witness in a total of ten charters from 819 to 862,⁷⁴ and two marginal notes in the cartulary refer to him as 'abbot'.⁷⁵ All the transactions in which Adalhelm/Althelm participated postdate the dispute in question, but they do establish a link between Otgar and an Althelm which finds a parallel in the Otacar and the Althelm of the undated court case. Whether the Adalhelm/Althelm in the later Weissenburg charters and the Althelm mentioned in the judgement were the same person is possible, but unlikely. He would have been very young in 807, too young perhaps to have been delegated the task of adjudicating a dispute. Nonetheless, he might have been a descendant of an earlier Adalhelm, since the name recurs after 772 in north Alsatian villages associated with Weissenburg.⁷⁶

At court, the monks had to surmount two problems. They had to overcome the fact that the *precariae* of the brothers' forebears stipulated no provisions for labour service or financial obligations; and that the brothers' *precaria* did not include the property at Berg or a submission on the point of financial burdens. They would have to, as one historian has put it in a different context, lie with the truth.⁷⁷ What the monks possessed was the brothers' admission they had held property unjustly, their submission and a document to prove both. The summary of the court case, studded with phrases echoing Rodoin's ancient will, asserts that the brothers 'did not want to hold [the properties Rodoin had given] justly, as is plainly expressed in the [brothers' precarial] document'. The monks in effect had accused the brothers of a violation of the long-standing agreement between the family and the monastery, and evidently hoped to have their rights and the revised conditions validated at the hearing. They approached Otacar who, as the future abbot of Weissenburg, probably already was locally connected. Otacar delegated the case to Althelm, a local notable, who knew the region intimately. He ruled in favour of the monastery, although we do not know whether the brothers capitulated immediately.

The dispute simmered until 807, when Rodoin and Gebahart made a donation of property, which they had acquired from a certain Theotswind, for the soul of a certain Rodung, probably a kinsman and Theotswind's late husband.⁷⁸ Let us recall that Glöckner and Doll proposed that the presterial

⁷³ Ibid., nos. 268, 269; see also n. 3, p. 512.

⁷⁴ Ibid., nos. 151, 156, 177 (819), 49, 200, 51, 268, 269, 272 (862), 273.

⁷⁵ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 353.

⁷⁶ The charters of Weissenburg suggest the existence of three successive Adalhelms; see below, chapter 6, pp. 198–9.

⁷⁷ Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum*, p. 147. ⁷⁸ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 199.

statement attached to this donation of 807 represented a renewal of the brothers' precarial arrangement. The brothers, they reasoned, had to renew their tenure, which in friendlier circumstances would have lasted for life. In support of their hypothesis, they cite a formula of Marculf, which requires the renewal of *precariae* for holders who had been at odds with a church.⁷⁹ However, it is questionable whether monasteries specifically targeted disputed property for renewal, because another precarial formula from Marculf stipulates a renewal regardless of the status of the precarist.⁸⁰ These two formulas of Marculf also required a renewal every five years, a span of time that is impossible to reconcile with a renewal in 807. In any case, the *prestariae* of 788 and 807 say nothing of renewals. The former simply stipulates that the brothers were to enjoy usufruct for life, and the latter that the brothers had made the donation in exchange for precarial rights to the properties at Berg and Waldhambach.

The donation of 807, then, marks not a renewal of the brothers' *precaria*, but rather the resolution of a chronic dispute. If there is any record of a settlement in the cartulary, it is to be found not in the brothers' *precaria* or in the undated judgement against them, but in the presterial statement attached to the donation of 807, which makes it clear that the disputed properties were awarded to the brothers in exchange for a gift of property. The presterial statement appended to Rodoin and Gebahart's donation of 807 asserts that, in exchange for the donation just made, the brothers 'shall receive in *precaria* some property. . . in Waldhambach and Berg, which their father held in benefice, except that forest'.⁸¹ If we assume that the notary chose his words carefully, which is likely considering the contested nature of the property, his variation of tenurial terms must have been intended to distinguish the conditions of the father's *precaria* from those of his sons. When we consider that this presterial statement was composed after 786, when Weissenburg began to assess a precarial *census* as a matter of policy, the notary must have meant that Eburhart had held the property as an unburdened 'benefice',⁸² but that his sons were to hold the property 'in *precaria*', which in 807 would have indicated a burdened grant. In other words, in 807 the brothers agreed to pay rent in return for the properties at Waldhambach and Berg. The rift between the monks and the family must have been completely mended, because in 830 Gebahart and his son Lantfrit made yet another sizeable donation to Weissenburg.⁸³

⁷⁹ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 409; *Marculfi Formulae*, bk 2, no. 41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 5. ⁸¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 199.

⁸² Cf. Adriaan Verhulst, 'Beneficium, Benefizium', in *Lexicon des Mittelalters* vol. I (Munich, 1980), column 1904.

⁸³ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 198, 251.

The monks who copied the charters into the cartulary around 860, when the complexities of the case had long been forgotten, ordered them in a way that expressed the ultimate outcome of the dispute: they entered the judgement into the cartulary as part of Rodoin's *precaria* of 717 (no. 196), which follows Rodoin's will of 718 (no. 194) and his final *precaria* of 718 (no. 195); and then after the judgement they entered the charter of 788 (no. 197), which included Rodoin and Gebahart's submission in the *precaria* and Ermbert's *prestaria* replete with burdens. The sequence of charters gives off the impression that the dispute arose over the rightful possession of Rodoin's original donations, that the monastery took its case to court, that the brothers submitted and petitioned the monastery that they be invested with the properties, and that the monastery granted them back in return for labour service and rent. Needless to say, this oversimplifies the situation greatly and masks the determined opposition to rents that Ermbert encountered from traditional patrons.

VESTIGES OF DISCONTENT

Echoes of resistance to Ermbert's initiative to impose burdens on *precariae* reverberate in the transactions of other patrons, a sign that the imposition of *census* must have touched off widespread discontentment which now lies buried beneath the formulaic routine of charters. Appearing first during Ermbert's abbacy are precarial and presterial documents which conclude that the abbot, rather than the precarist (as was usual), had ordered the transactions to be made. The cartulary records four such *precariae*, one that dates later to 840 during Otgar's abbacy,⁸⁴ and three that cluster tightly around the years 787–8, just as Weissenburg began to burden grants systematically.⁸⁵ One is the now familiar *precaria* of Rodoin and Gebahart. A second dates to January 787, when a certain Ingobert acknowledged his gift of property, his request for usufruct and an agreement to pay twenty *denarii*.⁸⁶ At this point in Ingobert's charter, a presterial statement intervenes to inform the reader in the third person of Ingobert's legal obligation to pay. It concludes with the statement that 'Bishop Ermbert asked this *prestaria* to be made' and is followed by a list of witnesses, all of whom were monks of Weissenburg. A third is the *precaria* of a certain Helidmunt, which was transacted on 4 February 788, just five days after the date of the *prestaria* attached to Rodoin and Gebahart's *precaria*. Helidmunt's *precaria* strongly hints at some sort of a compromise in the face of the monastery's determination to exact a *census*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 151. ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 197, 208, 258. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 258.

According to the condition of his grant, Helidmund agreed to give the monastery eight *jurnales* of land and his portion of a hearth 'on account of the *census* which I am supposed to give every year'.⁸⁷

Ermbert's assertiveness breaks through the constraints of two other transactions. As we noted in the [previous chapter](#), the assessment of burdens on the *precaria* of two original donors before 786 looks suspicious.⁸⁸ In his *precaria* of 713, the Wolfoald-Gundoin Werald allegedly agreed to pay one *solidus* for usufruct of his donation. However, the *census* was not stipulated in the petition clause of the transaction, as is typical. It merely states that the monastery was supposed to grant Werald the property in usufruct until his death, at which time the property would revert to the monastery. The payment clause instead was inserted clumsily into the middle of the concluding protocol, which customarily records only the location and date of the transaction. The payment clause also contradicts the petition clause: the former stipulates that Werald should hold the property in *precaria* only for 'as long as it is your will' and goes on to lay down the one-*solidus census*, even though the latter states he was to hold it until death.⁸⁹ Additional clues that the financial conditions were interpolated emerge when we compare Werald's *precaria* with his original, conditional donation two months before, which granted him unburdened use of the property for life.⁹⁰ It surely is no coincidence that the property in Werald's charter was located in Waldhambach next to that belonging to Rodoin, son of Peter, from whose descendants the monastery was eager to exact a *census* in 788.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 208: 'Postea quoque mea peticio uel bonorum [hominum] fuit, ut ipsas res concedatis mihi sub usu fructuario, quod ita et fecistis, ut debeam colere illas res diebus uite meae. Conuenit autem nobis atque placuit, ut de ipsa re statim relinquerem in uestro arbitrio jurnales VIII et porcionem meam de illa arde propter illum censum quod annis singulis deberem dare; et uobis conplacuit atque mihi, quod ita et feci.'

⁸⁸ Cf. above, chapter 3, p. 85.

⁸⁹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 256: 'Set postea ad nostra pe[tit]ione suprascripta rem uso fructuario nobis concessistis. Propterea hanc precaria uobis conscribere rogauimus, ut post obitum quoque nostrum suprascripta rem uel quidquid ibidem laborare aut meliorare potuerimus, ad integrum ad partem supradicta mo[n]asterio uestro absque ullius iudicis interbellationis in dei nomine reuertere que fecit stipulatione suxnixa. Actum pupplice ad monasterio Uuizenburgo quod ego per meum testamentum idem concessit ad excollum usum fructurum, ut ego exinde uobis censum redere soletu legitimum quam diu uestra uoluntas est et quantum uobis placuiterit ipsa res recipe sine ullius hominis contradictione hoc faciatis.

Ueroaldo qui hanc precaria fieri rogauit sub die X kalendas madias anno tertio regnante domino nostro Dacoberto regis.'

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 192.

⁹¹ According to Rodoin's will of 718 (*ibid.*, no. 227), Werald's property (*ibid.*, no. 192) lay alongside his own: 'Dono in pago Saroinse in uill[a] Chaganbach. . . silua ibidem porcione mea medietatem. Et de ipsa silua ad unum latere est fluuius Aquila ad alium uero latere excurrit rectus Mittilibrunnus et de ipsa latere est finis Chaganbahcinsis quem Ueroaldus pro testamentum tituli ad ipso monasterio superius denominatum firmavit.'

The second episode dates to 765 when a certain Albrich requested usufruct of a donation made six months before. The first third of the *precaria* records Albrich's request, but crudely inserted into the middle of the charter is the monastery's presterial clause, which stipulates a yearly *census* of eighty measures of salt.⁹² This *prestaria* is then followed by Albrich's promise to pay the *census*. The charter is peculiar to say the least, since Albrich's petition clause does not specify a *census*. Only two other charters in the cartulary bear such intrusive presterial statements: Ingobert's *precaria* of 787, and Rodoin and Gebahart's *precaria* of 788. It is probable that the presterial conditions in Albrich's charter reflect a subsequent reworking of an originally unburdened *precaria* from 765. The financial conditions in the *precaria* of Albrich, who was still alive in 789, and the *census* inserted into Werald's *precaria* most likely were interpolated in the late 780s when Weissenburg began to assert its right to levy precarial *census* indiscriminately, and then later copied into the cartulary as fact. An interfamilial squabble over the donation of property by a certain Gunthart might have presented Ermbert with a golden opportunity to renegotiate Albrich's *precaria*. In March 789 a certain Gunthart had presumed to donate property that had been given to both himself and to Albrich by a certain Albgers. Albrich must have objected because he and Gunthart together redid the donation six months later.⁹³ Had the acceptance of burdens on his *precaria* literally been the price Albrich had had to pay to have the donation reworked in his name?

How successful Weissenburg ever was in collecting rents is unknowable, but the charters make it clear enough that the monks had compelled many precarists to recognize the monastery's right to levy them. In some cases, Ermbert leaned on precarists to submit, but as we saw in the [previous chapter](#), many of Weissenburg's patrons, as many patrons throughout the Frankish world, had powerful, positive incentives to endure the abbot's high-handedness. They could not have helped noticing the monastery's burgeoning holdings and would have ultimately concluded that these payments were a small price to pay for the prospects of additional grants from satisfied monks.

⁹² *Ibid.*, no. 264: 'Venerabile in Christo Eremberto episcopo. Dum et omnibus non abetur incognitum, qualiter in dei nomen Albericus precatur dummodo me[a] fuit petitio et uestra decreuit uoluntas, ut ad meam pe[tit]ionem uel supplicationem rem uestram in loco noncupante que dicitur Altorfo et Badgisingas in pago Salinago, quem ego ipse Albericus per meum testamentum ad parte ecclesie sancto Petro Uuizenburgo condonau[i], tibi in beneficio concedere deberimus, quod ita et fecimus ad usu fructuario dum tu aduixeris, in ea uero ratio[ne, ut] anni[s] singulis in cinso modius LXXX de sale dare debeas. Et si de ipso cinso negli[gens] aut tardus aparuerio, cum fide facta ipso ci[n]so restituum.'

⁹³ *Ibid.*, nos. 259/60.

THE POLITICS OF OLD GERMAN

Carolingian political consolidation in the later eighth century went hand in hand with an ambitious cultural reform. This renewal, the so-called Carolingian renaissance, was perhaps the Carolingians' most enduring contribution to the Western tradition. The educational and Latin linguistic reforms of the period bequeathed to Europe a common literary tradition,¹ although in their own time the initiatives had as their goals the reform of the clergy and liturgy, the religious education of the laity and the purification of Latin to establish a standard language of rulership.² In short, the Carolingian court sought to bring the disparate regions and peoples of the empire under a unifying moral purpose. This bold effort to create an empire greater than the sum of its parts points up both the ambitious ideals of, and the practical limitations to, imperial unity.

This undertaking was dependent upon the Carolingians' successful cultivation of monasteries and the growth in ecclesiastical wealth. Monasteries, with their pious, disciplined and educated staffs, and bristling with landed wealth, which now was augmented by rents as well as gifts from Carolingian conquests, were made responsible for promulgating the programme. Indeed, the burdens of reform probably played no small part in the concurrent determination of monasteries to extract rents. Although these reforms applied throughout the empire, they varied from region to region as monks adapted royal edicts to local circumstances. The greatest challenges centred on lay instruction. The fundamental difficulty

¹ Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1973), pp. 27–30, 45–8.

² McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 20–1; Janet L. Nelson, 'Literacy in Carolingian Government', in Rosamond McKitterick ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 267–8. On the Carolingian renaissance and reforms, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms 789–895* (London, 1977); Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 181–389; Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), pp. 1–80; and Collins, *Charlemagne*, pp. 102–24.

was that the people of the Carolingian Empire spoke languages that belonged mainly to two linguistic traditions, Romance and Germanic. While the clerical elite were literate in Latin, and the laity in the western portions presumably was able to make sense of the old Roman language, this was not the case in the eastern regions. The reforms would have to be adjusted to meet their needs.

Over a half century ago the prodigious philologist Georg Baesecke proposed that Charlemagne had sponsored a *karlisch* renaissance, the vernacular flip-side of the Latin renaissance initiated by the emperor and his court of ecclesiastical advisors.³ Baesecke's claims have received little notice from historians, partly on account of his problematic assumption that developments in the German language were tied to the decisions of great figures, such as Charlemagne and Alcuin,⁴ but mainly because of the comparative lack of evidence for such a grandiose programme. Germanic linguists and literary scholars have since underscored the relative modesty of the vernacular phenomenon and its essential subordination to Latin learning and the pastoral imperatives of Carolingian reform.⁵ If the reigning minimalism has deflated the evocative grandiosity of earlier visions, it has had the advantage of situating the vernacular in its proper context and calling attention, albeit implicitly, to its potentially more radical role. The pastoral enterprise demanded the translation of prayers which, even though modest in length and complexity, were devised to disseminate the essentials of Christian doctrine to the laity.⁶ Out of this impulse emerged ever more sophisticated and lengthier productions which were designed to communicate the Christian message in an engaging, epic form and which eventually were consciously conceived as literary symbols of Frankish lordship. Wolfgang Haubrichs has proposed that Charlemagne's grandson, Louis the German, was most responsible for the development of vernacular literature, since many of the most

³ Georg Baesecke, 'Die karlische Renaissance und das deutsche Schrifttum', in Georg Baesecke, *Kleinere Schriften zur althochdeutschen Sprache und Literatur*, ed. Werner Schröder (Bern, Munich, 1966), pp. 377-445.

⁴ See for example, Baesecke's 'Das Abecedarium Nordmannicum', in *Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 237-48. For criticisms of Baesecke's tendency to mix linguistic and historical analysis, see Dieter Geuenich, 'Die volkssprachige Überlieferung der Karolingerzeit aus der Sicht des Historikers', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 39 (1983), pp. 104-30, esp. pp. 105-17; and R. Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta: The English Tradition*, Rijksuniversiteit te Gent: Werken uitgegeven door de Faculteit van de Wijsbegeerte en Letteren 118 (Bruges, 1954), pp. xlviii-1, 279-82.

⁵ Dennis H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800-1300* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 43-54.

⁶ Wolfgang Haubrichs, *Die Anfänge: Versuche volkssprachiger Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter (c. 700-1050/60)* in J. Heinze ed., *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Neuzeit*, vol. I: *Von den Anfängen zum hohen Mittelalter*, pt 1 (Frankfurt, 1988), pp. 280-311.

important Old German texts appeared during his reign.⁷ This conspicuous output was the fruit of a conscious cultural programme initiated by Louis the German to secure his position in east Francia during the turbulent second third of the ninth century. Louis the German, he argues, had commissioned the two masterpieces of Old German literature – the Old Saxon *Heliand*, an alliterative epic of the life of Jesus, and Otfrid of Weissenburg's Old High German *Evangelienbuch*, a versification of the Gospels – for the northern Saxon and southern Frankish portions of his realm, respectively. These works fit into a larger political scheme which sought 'in a synthesis of *karlisch* and Anianian reform to produce a unifying Christian culture for the Germanic portion of the Empire'.⁸

Haubrichs's thesis, at least in its broad outlines, has been sympathetically received,⁹ but, similar to Baesecke, he presumed that innovations were closely bound to the creativity of individual rulers. While broad developments in vernacular literature certainly are traceable to the patronage of particular kings, an overemphasis on royal agency obscures the complex interplay of local inclinations and the needs of the political centre that stimulated cultural activity. To the extent that rulers were responsible for literary output, they were more likely to set the broad goals that might inspire monasteries to initiate vernacular productions than to decree the composition of any particular works. Conversely, the monks themselves, inspired by their own piety and goaded on by supportive local patrons, were quite capable of seizing the initiative

⁷ Wolfgang Haubrichs, 'Die Praefatio des Heliand: Ein Zeugnis der Religions- und Bildungspolitik Ludwigs des Deutschen', *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch* 89 (1966), pp. 7–32; 'Otfrids St. Galler "Studienfreunde"', *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 4 (1973), pp. 49–112; 'Eine Prosopographische Skizze zu Otfrid von Weissenburg', in Wolfgang Kleiber ed., *Otfrid von Weissenburg* (Darmstadt, 1978), pp. 397–413; 'Nekrologische Notizen zu Otfrid von Weissenburg: Prosopographische Studien zum sozialen Umfeld und zur Rezeption des Evangelienbuches', in Horst Wenzel ed., *Adelsherrschaft und Literatur* (Frankfurt, 1980), pp. 7–113; 'Althochdeutsch in Fulda und Weissenburg – Hrabanus Maurus und Otfrid von Weissenburg', in Raymond Kottje and Harald Zimmermann eds., *Hrabanus Maurus: Lehrer, Abt und Bischof, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur: Einzelveröffentlichung 4* (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 182–93.

⁸ Haubrichs, 'Prosopographische Skizze', pp. 408–9; cf. Haubrichs, 'Praefatio', pp. 11, 18–32; and Haubrichs, *Anfänge*, pp. 335–41.

⁹ Geuenich, 'Die volkssprachige Überlieferung', pp. 117–19, 129; and more recently, Dieter Geuenich, 'Ludwig "der Deutsche" und die Entstehung des ostfränkischen Reiches', in Wolfgang Haubrichs et al. eds., *Theodisca: Beiträge zur althochdeutschen und altniederdeutschen Sprache und Literature in der Kultur des frühen Mittelalters* (Berlin, New York, 2000), pp. 313–29, esp. pp. 318, 322–5; see also Wilfrid Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (Darmstadt, 2002), pp. 225–7; Heinz Thomas, 'Jenksk: Zur Geschichte von *theodiscus* und *teutonicus* im Frankreich des 9. Jahrhunderts', in Schieffer ed., *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum*, pp. 67–95, esp. pp. 82–3; and Dennis H. Green, 'Three Aspects of the Old Saxon Biblical Epic, the *Heliand*', in Dennis H. Green and Frank Siegmund eds., *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century* (Rochester, N.Y.; Woodbridge, UK, 2003), pp. 247–63, esp. p. 250.

and undertaking projects which might attract the attention of the king and his advisors. In other words, literary innovation might originate at court or be inspired by the local impulses of a particular monastery, although most often it bore fruit as a result of the dynamic interaction of the court, monasticism and local initiative. In order to investigate the relationship between royal lordship, cultural reform and local impulses, we shall examine the production of vernacular literature in Alsace, a major centre of vernacular activity in the Carolingian period. Initially the outgrowth of an attempt to translate Charlemagne's political and ecclesiastical reforms into local practice, vernacular compositions became increasingly politicized as they were adapted to the purpose of acculturating Saxony during the reign of Louis the Pious, and then to the task of creating a cultural basis for the east Frankish kingdom as the empire was divided into regional kingdoms during the second third of the ninth century. In the appropriation of a developing German vernacular tradition, one sees in addition to conquest and the co-option of proprietary networks a third, central aspect of the Carolingian insertion into regions of the Frankish world.

CAROLINGIAN REFORM IN OLD HIGH GERMAN

Alsace was located on the Germanic side of the linguistic divide that ran roughly southeast from Metz to the mid-Vosges and then along the western slope of the Vosges to the Burgundian Gate. If the linguistic features of extant texts are a fair guide, it can be adduced that in the north of Alsace, the Frankish dialect of the mid-Rhine region was prevalent, and that in the south, the Alemannic dialect of southwestern Germany was pervasive.¹⁰ The major centres of written vernacular in Alsace were Murbach, where some of the earliest German glosses appeared, and Weissenburg, putative home of the so-called *Weissenburg Catechism*. Taken together, Murbach and Weissenburg represent the bipartite aims of early medieval vernacular productions: the compilation of glosses, which were used to teach monks Latin, and the composition of basic prayers for catechetical purposes. We might also notice that both monasteries had been founded by local kindreds, continued to draw their strength from the generosity of the surrounding aristocracy and had been drawn into the Carolingian orbit in the course of the eighth century. These were the types of place ripe for putting the vernacular at the service of pastoral reform.

¹⁰ C.J. Wells, *German: A Linguistic History to 1945* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 42-4, 50-3.

As elsewhere, German crystallized into a written language in Alsace on the heels of the Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent,¹¹ a secondary phase in a tradition of insular evangelism dating back to the Irish monks who had left an indelible mark on the Vosges.¹² The missions began in the late seventh century with Willibrord and Wilfrid, and reached their apogee in the mid-eighth with Boniface and his associates, most of whom formed a tightly knit circle of kith and kin.¹³ The efforts of the missionaries were directed usually toward the east, into the Germanic regions, where insular reformers founded monasteries and organized a Romano-Frankish brand of Christianity.¹⁴ Boniface in particular founded the great monastery of Fulda, which in time became a vibrant centre of vernacular activity, reorganized the churches in Francia, Alemannia, Bavaria and Thuringia, and established Mainz as the metropolitan of the east. This flow of English talent continued into the latter eighth century, when Charlemagne lured to his court luminaries such as the pedagogue Alcuin of York, around whom a literary circle formed and whose students provided the leadership for the Carolingian cultural reforms.¹⁵

Anglo-Saxon clerics long had been sympathetic to the use of English, both in the codification of English law and for routine pastoral care.¹⁶ Their reasons were practical rather than ideological: the laity, as Bede himself advised, needed to be taught basic Christian prayers – the Creed and the Lord's Prayer – in English, because they could not understand Latin. For that he felt that priests, many of whom were illiterate in Latin, should be supplied with vernacular translations of the prayers.¹⁷ Not

¹¹ J. Hofmann, 'Altenglische und althochdeutsche Glossen aus Würzburg und dem weiteren angelsächsischen Missionsgebiet', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 85 (Halle, 1963), pp. 27–131.

¹² Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 121–445.

¹³ Rosamond McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences', *Vaughan Paper* 36 (Leicester, 1991); reprinted in Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, UK, Brookfield, Ver., 1995).

¹⁴ Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2003), pp. 411–25.

¹⁵ Josef Fleckenstein, 'Alcuin im Kreis der Hofgelehrten Karls des Grossen', in Paul Leo Butzer and Dietrich Lohmann eds., *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times* (Basle, Boston, 1993), pp. 3–21.

¹⁶ On pastoral care in Anglo-Saxon England, see *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe, *Studies in the Early History of Britain* (Leicester, New York, 1992); and the minster discussions: Eric Cambridge and David Rollason, 'Debate: The Pastoral Organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A Review of the "Minster Hypothesis"', *Early Medieval Europe* 4, 1 (1995), pp. 87–104; John Blair, 'Debate: Ecclesiastical Organization and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England', *Early Medieval Europe* 4, 2 (1995), pp. 113–18; and D.M. Palliser, 'Review Article: The "Minster Hypothesis": A Case Study', *Early Medieval Europe* 5, 2 (1996), pp. 207–14.

¹⁷ Bede, *Epistola ad Egbertum*, in Charles Plummer ed., *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* (Oxford, 1896), pp. 405–23: c. 5, pp. 408–9.

surprisingly, Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the continent stocked their new foundations not only with texts of the Latin pagan and patristic classics that filled the archives of English monasteries, but also with those of Bede, whose works outlined the techniques of conversion and provided a blueprint for ecclesiastical organization.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the earliest continental manuscript of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is known to have been at Charlemagne's court toward the end of the eighth century,¹⁸ a presence that intersected with Alcuin's royal service and the promulgation in 789 of Charlemagne's *Admonitio Generalis* (General Admonition). This capitulary and another, *De Litteris Colendis* (On the Cultivation of Letters), have been celebrated in modern historiography as the seminal charters for the reform of learning and education in the empire.¹⁹ The *Admonitio Generalis* spelled out the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith and advised that all congregations be taught the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.²⁰ Its promulgation, and the conciliar legislation that followed in the decade after 800, energized pastoral activities throughout the empire.²¹ Although the capitulary says nothing about the use of the vernacular for lay instruction, an Old High German exhortation to the laity, dubbed the *Exhortatio ad Plebem Christianam*, which bids its listeners to be familiar with the basic tenets and prayers of Christianity and to take responsibility for the religious instruction of their children, must have been a product of the pastoral efforts mobilized by the *Admonitio* and subsequent councils.²² Vestiges of the manuscript tradition suggest that the *Exhortatio* enjoyed a wide circulation in the east: the two surviving, ninth-century copies of the sermon were produced in Bavaria, probably at Regensburg and Niederaltaich, but made their way into the archives of Fulda and Freising, where they were preserved.²³

Old High German translations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, some of the earliest texts in continental vernacular, follow closely upon the promulgation of Charlemagne's edicts and coincide roughly with the

¹⁸ Cambridge University Library Manuscript, Kk.5.16; Bernhard Bischoff, 'The Court Library of Charlemagne', in Michael M. Gorman trans. and ed., *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology 1 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 56–75, esp. pp. 67–8; and McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 209. On the dissemination of Bede's works beyond the courts, see Rosamond McKitterick, 'Kulturelle Verbindungen zwischen England und den fränkischen Reichen in der Zeit der Karolinger: Kontexte und Implikationen', in Joachim Ehlers ed., *Deutschland und der westen Europas im Mittelalter*, Vorträge und Forschungen 56 (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 121–48, esp. 125–32.

¹⁹ McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 145–6. ²⁰ *Capitularia* vol. I, no. 22, c. 70, p. 59.

²¹ McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 1–19.

²² *Exhortatio ad Plebem Christianam*, in Elias Steinmeyer ed., *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler* (Berlin, 1916), no. 9, pp. 49–51.

²³ Bernhard Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen deutscher Denkmäler der Karolingerzeit', in Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. III, pp. 73–111, esp. pp. 99, 100–1.

Exhortatio. They first appear, so far as the extant record attests, in the southern regions of east Francia. The so-called *Sangaller Paternoster und Credo* was written in a late eighth-century hand and contains linguistic features that point to an early form of the Alemannic dialect.²⁴ Another translation, the so-called *Freisinger Paternoster*, was made into Bavarian.²⁵ It is preserved in two manuscripts, one of which dates to around 800.²⁶ Today these basic prayers are found within Latin codices and appear to have been used for pedagogical purposes because they are either paired with the equivalent Latin prayer or include brief German commentaries as if to explain a point. This is not an indication that vernacular prayers merely were restricted to the monastery and thus disconnected from the rest of society, since those educated by these means surely included the monks and priests who acted as pastors to the dependent village churches and cells that serviced the laity. The marginal, almost serendipitous survival of these prayers may testify to their greater use in the reform of the peripheral clergy, about which little documentation has survived.

Within this framework of general religious reform, as it came to be expressed throughout the Germanic east, Old High German crystallized into written form in Alsace. The most outstanding evidence anywhere for the application of the vernacular to Charlemagne's reforms is the early ninth-century *Weissenburg Catechism*.²⁷ Written into a Latin codex containing miscellaneous theological matter, the *Catechism* contains five texts – the Lord's Prayer (followed by a sentence-by-sentence commentary in German derived from the *Gelasian Sacramentary*), a list of the deadly sins in Latin with German translations, the *Apostle's Creed*, the *Quicumque vult*, and finally the *Gloria in Excelsis* – all of which are mentioned in the *Admonitio Generalis*.²⁸ The overlap is not seamless, since the *Admonitio* recommends the *Gloria Patri* rather than the *Gloria in Excelsis*, but the *Catechism* does bear a striking conformity to the outlines of Charlemagne's decree.²⁹ The German is south-Rhenish Franconian, the vernacular

²⁴ *Sangaller Paternoster und Credo*, in Steinmeyer ed., *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, no. 5, pp. 27–8; see also J. Knight Bostock, *A Handbook on Old High German Literature*, 2nd edn, rev. by K. C. King and D. R. McLintock (Oxford, 1976), p. 111; and Herbert Penzl, *Althochdeutsch: Eine Einführung in Dialekt und Vorgeschichte*, Germanistische Lehrbuchsammlung 7 (Bern, New York, 1986), pp. 98–9.

²⁵ *Altbayerisches [Freisinger] Paternoster*, in Steinmeyer ed., *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, no. 8, pp. 43–8.

²⁶ Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen', pp. 89–90, 99.

²⁷ *Weissenburger Katechismus*, in Steinmeyer ed., *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, no. 6, pp. 29–38.

²⁸ *Capitularia* vol. I, no. 22, c. 70, p. 59; and c. 82, pp. 61–2.

²⁹ Bostock, *Handbook*, pp. 112–13; Hans Butzmann, 'Die Weissenburger Handschriften: Einleitung zum Katalog' (1964), in Hans Butzmann, *Kleine Schriften: Festgabe zum 70. Geburtstag* (Graz, 1973), pp. 48–103, esp. pp. 55–6.

of the area around Weissenburg, but it remains a possibility that the collection was produced at Worms, whose bishop, Bernhar, was at that time the abbot of Weissenburg.³⁰

Whether Charlemagne thought his decrees would stimulate the composition of vernacular prayers is unknown and largely irrelevant, although by 813 Charlemagne is on the record at the Council of Tours advising that fundamental beliefs be transmitted by means of homilies dispensed in the Romance and Germanic vernaculars.³¹ While there is no evidence to suggest a conscious effort on Charlemagne's part to orchestrate something so grand as a Germanic renaissance, royal capitularies did assign to monasteries the task of inculcating the basic tenets of Christianity. The means were left up to the pragmatism of monks, who adapted general ordinances to local conditions. In the east, this meant the teaching of prayers in German. Only during the reigns of Charlemagne's successors were creative and more ambitious vernacular compositions undertaken.

LOUIS THE PIOUS AND THE OLD SAXON *HELIAND* AND *GENESIS*

We lose sight of vernacular activity in Alsace until the 860s, when Otfrid of Weissenburg completed his ambitious *Evangelienbuch* and dedicated it to Louis the German. Between the simple translations of prayers of Charlemagne's time and the *Evangelienbuch* lay a fruitful period of innovation outside Alsace that prepared the ground for Otfrid's sophisticated and more politicized enterprise. In order to understand the circumstances that shaped Otfrid's task we need to understand the crucial role of Fulda, where Otfrid was educated, the most important centre of vernacular activity in the second quarter of the ninth century. During this time monks at Fulda, and at northern monasteries under Fulda's influence, progressed beyond the modest efforts of the preceding generation and composed extensive gospel narratives.³² These biblical epics, although still dependent on Latin models, were by contrast with the catechetical texts bound in codices for their exclusive preservation. These included a translation of Tatian's second-century gospel harmony, commonly called the Old High German *Tatian*, the Old Saxon *Heliand*, an alliterative epic

³⁰ Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen', pp. 92–3; Haubrichs, *Anfänge*, p. 290.

³¹ *Concilia aevi Karolini* vol. I, no. 38, c. 17, p. 288.

³² Dieter Geuenich, 'Zur althochdeutschen Literatur aus Fulda', in Artur Brall ed., *Von der Klosterbibliothek zur Landesbibliothek: Beiträge zum zweihundertjährigen Bestehen der Hessische Landesbibliothek Fulda* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 99–124; Johannes Rathofer, 'Altsächsische Literature', in Ludwig Erich Schmitt ed., *Kurzer Grundriß der germanischen Philologie bis 1500*, vol. II: *Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 247–61.

of almost 6,000 lines which portrays the life of Christ in a Germanic context,³³ and the Old Saxon *Genesis*, also an alliterative epic which creatively retells tragic episodes from the first book of the Bible.³⁴ Of these we shall focus on the two Saxon works because they were introduced by a Latin preface which purports to reveal the royal origins of the poems.³⁵ Consequently, they allow us to explore the evolving dynamic between regional vernacular activity and royal patronage, a development that would find its fullest expression in Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*.

According to the preface, a certain *Ludovicus piissimus Augustus* expressed his wish that the Old and New Testaments be versified in the Saxon language, so that all who speak the vernacular might have access, like the learned, to the scriptures.³⁶ The 'most pious emperor Louis' would appear to be Louis the Pious, but, on the grounds that the title *imperator* is also known to have been bestowed on Louis the German by monks at St Gall and at Werden,³⁷ the latter of which is believed to have had a hand in the creation of the Old Saxon epic, arguments for Louis the German have been advanced. In his widely cited investigation, Haubrichs has argued that the preface was written after the *Heliand* and *Genesis*, but that it recalls the earliest stage in an ambitious programme by Louis the German to create a cultural basis for his east Frankish kingdom.³⁸ Clues in content and style suggest that it was composed by Hrabanus Maurus sometime around the Synod of Mainz in 848, when Hrabanus and Louis the German re-issued Charlemagne's earlier recommendation at the Council of Tours (813) that homilies be preached in the vernacular.

³³ G. Ronald Murphy, *The Saxon Savior: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth Century Heliand* (Oxford, 1989).

³⁴ Alger N. Doane, *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis* (Madison, 1991).

³⁵ *Praefatio in librum antiquum lingua Saxonica conscriptum*, in *Heliand und Genesis*, ed. Otto Behaghel, rev. by Burkhard Taeger (Tübingen, 1984), pp. 1–2. On the preface, see Kurt Hannemann, 'Die Lösung des Rätsels der Herkunft der Heliandpraefatio. Mit Nachtrag 1972', in Jürgen Eichhoff and Irmgard Rauch eds., *Der Heliand* (Darmstadt, 1973), pp. 1–13; Willy Krogmann, 'Die Praefatio in librum antiquum lingua Saxonica conscriptum', *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 69/70 (1943/7), pp. 141–63, esp. pp. 141–51; and Francis P. Magoun Jr, 'The Praefatio and Versus Associated with Some Old-Saxon Biblical Poems', in *Medieval Studies in Honor of Jeremiah Denis Matthias Ford* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), pp. 107–36.

³⁶ *Praefatio*, *Heliand und Genesis*, p. 1.

³⁷ See Edmund E. Stengel, 'Kaisertitel und Suveränitätsidee. Studien und Vorgeschichte des modernen Staatsbegriffs', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 3 (1939), pp. 1–56, esp. pp. 50–6; Heinz Zatschek, 'Die Erwähnungen Ludwigs des Deutschen als Imperator', *Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte des Mittelalters* 6 (1943), pp. 374–8; Richard Drögeleit, *Werden und der Heliand: Studien zur Kulturgeschichte der Abtei Werden und zur Herkunft des Heliand* (Essen, 1951), pp. 93–111; and Wolfgang Eggert, *Das ostfränkisch-deutsche Reich in der Auffassung seiner Zeitgenossen* (Vienna, Cologne, Graz, 1973), pp. 30–1, 58–9, 261–2.

³⁸ Haubrichs, 'Praefatio', pp. 7–32.

However, the preface seems to refer retrospectively to a genesis of the poems during the reign of Louis the Pious, i.e. before 840. Building upon research which suggests that the preface points to Louis the German rather than Louis the Pious, Haubrichs has proposed that Louis the German must have drawn up plans for vernacular versifications of the Bible between 833 and 838, when he first fancied himself sovereign in east Francia and when he would have received the help of none other than Hrabanus,³⁹ during whose abbacy (822–41) the monastery at Fulda produced so many vernacular works.⁴⁰ Haubrichs concludes that the *Heliand* was written sometime between this earlier phase in Louis' career and around 850 when the preface probably was composed.

Upon further scrutiny, the case for Louis the German now appears to be exceedingly doubtful, and the identity of Louis the Pious has been strongly reasserted. A thorough review of charters, diplomas and literature shows that the titlature *Ludovicus piissimus Augustus* can refer only to Louis the Pious; that Louis the German could not have had the close contacts to Fulda in the 830s necessary for spearheading a vernacular programme at that time; and that the preface, if written by Hrabanus, was composed by him or an associate prior to 840.⁴¹ These Old Saxon works are more properly to be seen as fruits of missionary and pastoral activities among the Saxons undertaken by northern monasteries in the ninth century; indeed, the appearance of Old Saxon productions fits hand-in-glove with the conquest and consolidation of Saxony under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.⁴² The earliest text in Old Saxon, a baptismal vow, composed either at Fulda or Mainz in the late eighth or early ninth century, stands as textual witness to Charlemagne's attempts to impose Christianity on the Saxons.⁴³ The effort to convert Saxons continued into the reign of Louis the Pious, most visibly at the northern monasteries of Fulda, Werden and Corvey, all of which have been implicated in the production or dissemination of the *Heliand*. The *Heliand* was composed most likely at Werden, although the principal ninth-century manuscript of the poem was produced around 850 at

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30–2.

⁴⁰ Geuenich, 'Zur althochdeutschen Literatur aus Fulda', p. 104; Ingeborg Schröbler, 'Fulda und die althochdeutsche Literatur', *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 1 (1960), pp. 1–26, esp. pp. 16–26.

⁴¹ Hans Hummer, 'The Identity of *Ludovicus piissimus Augustus* in the *Prefatio in librum antiquum lingua Saxonica conscriptum*', *Francia* 31, 1 (2004), pp. 1–14; see also Karl Ferdinand Werner, '*Hludovicus Augustus*: Gouverner l'empire chrétien – Idées et réalités', in Peter Godman and Roger Collins eds., *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 3–124, esp. pp. 99–100 and n. 369; and Taeger in *Heliand und Genesis*, p. xxv, n. 37.

⁴² Werner, '*Hludovicus Augustus*', pp. 92–101.

⁴³ A. Lasch, 'Das altsächsische Taufgelöbniß', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 36 (1935), pp. 92–133; Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen', pp. 83–5.

Corvey, a foundation richly endowed by Louis the Pious.⁴⁴ The poem's content was influenced by the intellectual climate fostered at Fulda by Hrabanus Maurus: the author was familiar with Hrabanus's biblical commentaries; and he made use of the Old High German *Tatian*,⁴⁵ which had been translated at Fulda sometime between 825 and 835.⁴⁶ In sum, the depiction of Louis the Pious as patron of Saxon literature in the preface – a preface perhaps written by Hrabanus himself or by someone under his authority – squares nicely with other known historical facts or processes.

Whether Louis the Pious himself ordered that the *Heliand* and *Genesis* be composed, as the preface claims, is unknowable. Panegyric ascriptions were designed to flatter and exalt the ruler, to give him credit for things that happened during his reign, whether he directly was responsible for them or not, rather than to be literally accurate. The preface, for example, also claims the poems were the work of a single poet, even though this contradicts modern philological and linguistic analysis, which has concluded that the *Heliand* and *Genesis* were composed by separate individuals.⁴⁷ In the light of this caveat, one should treat with caution the claim in the preface that the ruler himself had ordered up a body of Old Saxon compositions. In addition, according to his biographer Thegan, Louis was antipathetic to the vernacular poems he had learned as a child:⁴⁸ he was well educated in Latin and Greek, his literary sympathies were Latin Christian, and he had been the ruler of deeply Romanized Aquitaine before becoming emperor. Thegan's testimony has even led to speculation, now widely doubted, that Louis destroyed the vernacular lays and epics that Einhard claims Charlemagne had collected.⁴⁹ Thegan apparently wanted to contrast the sober and serene Louis, who is depicted as a master of biblical exegesis, with the more gregarious father, who famously enjoyed secular heroic poetry.⁵⁰ We might infer from this that the

⁴⁴ On the case for Werden, see Drögereit, *Werden und der Heliand*. On the provenance of the manuscripts, see Bernhard Bischoff, 'Die Schriftheimat der Münchener Heliand-Handschrift', in Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien* vol. III, pp. 112–19.

⁴⁵ C. Weber, 'Der Dichter des Heliand im Verhältnis zu seinen Quellen', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 64 (1927), pp. 1–76; Juw fon Weringha, *Heliand and Diatessaron*, Studia Germanica 5 (Assen, 1965).

⁴⁶ Geuenich, 'Zur althochdeutschen Literatur aus Fulda', pp. 109–11, 123.

⁴⁷ Taeger, in *Heliand und Genesis*, pp. xxiii–xxiv; Bostock, *Handbook*, pp. 185–6.

⁴⁸ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici Imperatoris/Die Taten Kaiser Ludwigs*, ed. and German trans. Ernst Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hanover, 1995), c. 19, p. 200; cf. William C. McDonald and Ulrich Goebel, *German Literary Patronage from Charlemagne to Maximilian I*, Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache und Literatur 10 (Amsterdam, 1973), pp. 13–17.

⁴⁹ Geuenich, 'Die volkssprachige Überlieferung', pp. 113–15.

⁵⁰ Matthew Innes, '“He Never Even Allowed His White Teeth to be Bared in Laughter”: The Politics of Humour in the Carolingian Renaissance', in Guy Halsall ed., *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 131–56, esp. 137–47.

emperor would have had no aversion to the vernacular as such, but rather to its use in the production of worldly literature, and presumably would have applauded the composition of vernacular biblical epics. Whatever the case, the Old Saxon compositions certainly served Louis's overall aims as ruler. According to another biographer, the so-called Astronomer, Louis had rejected his father's harshness toward the Saxons and treated them more gently, reportedly counting them among his most devoted subjects.⁵¹ Indeed, the reconciliation of the Saxons to the Franks is now seen as one of Louis's landmark achievements.⁵² It is most reasonable to conclude that the Old Saxon biblical epics were produced at northern monasteries as a local response to Louis' general policy with respect to Saxony.⁵³ This would appear to be the sense of the preface, which claims on the one hand that the ruler commissioned the project, and on the other that the poet had already been divinely inspired to write it.⁵⁴ This was an artful way of saying that the project was advanced by monks who wrote in monasteries heavily dependent upon imperial patronage.

Louis the German justifiably is considered to have had more to do with the development of vernacular literature than any other Carolingian ruler,⁵⁵ but his particular genius lay not in the masterminding of projects. Louis astutely recognized the value of the vernacular for his lordship in east Francia and thereby granted it a higher profile and ensured its preservation. To understand properly his particular contribution we must distinguish the estimated date for the composition of particular vernacular works, many of which predated his reign, from Louis the German's subsequent efforts to draw them into his own programme of cultural reform around the mid-ninth century, efforts which account for the disproportionate survival of major vernacular manuscripts from his kingdom. Whereas the Old Saxon *Heliand* and the *Genesis*, as well as the Old High German *Tatian* – the three greatest vernacular works before Otfrid's Old High German *Evangelienbuch* – were composed either at Fulda or under the influence of Fulda in the 820s and 830s, the extant copies were made around 850 and cluster around Mainz during the reign of Louis the German. Of the five extant manuscripts of the *Heliand*, four were produced in the third quarter of the ninth century: one around 850 at Corvey, two around 850, or shortly thereafter, at Mainz, and one sometime between 850 and 875, possibly at Mainz, which also included

⁵¹ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici Imperatoris/Das Leben Kaiser Ludwigs*, ed. and German trans. Ernst Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hanover, 1995), c. 24, p. 356.

⁵² Werner, 'Hludovicus Augustus', pp. 94–101. ⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

⁵⁴ See Taeger in *Heliand und Genesis*, pp. xxiv–xxvii; and Hummer, 'Identity', pp. 13–14.

⁵⁵ Geuenich, 'Die volkssprachige Überlieferung', pp. 117–30.

excerpts of the Old Saxon *Genesis*.⁵⁶ The only complete manuscript of the *Tatian* was brought to St Gall sometime in the second half of the ninth century, but paleographical investigations have traced the body of the text to Fulda in the second quarter of the ninth century, and the preface and table of contents to Mainz sometime thereafter.⁵⁷

These patterns point to Louis the German's influential archbishop of Mainz, Hrabanus Maurus: the dates of original composition coincide with Hrabanus Maurus's abbacy at Fulda (822–41), and the copying efforts are traceable to mid ninth-century Mainz, when Hrabanus was archbishop (847–56). The earlier phase of composition, as we have seen, was connected to pastoral activities undertaken in accordance with Louis the Pious's general wishes. Although Hrabanus lost the abbacy at Fulda when Louis the German won out in the east, he quickly regained the favour of the east Frankish king. By 845 the two were reconciled, and Hrabanus soon was awarded the powerful archbishopric of Mainz.⁵⁸ The second phase, marked by preservation and promotion, was an outgrowth of Louis's evolving cultural interests. Although Louis's regional politics can be traced to his adoption in the 830s of the title *rex in orientali Francia*, no evidence exists to connect him at this early date to a programme of regional cultural reform.⁵⁹ The concentration of manuscript evidence around 850 suggests, rather, that Louis and his advisors began to promote the vernacular only after regional differences had been sharpened by the succession crises following the death of Louis the Pious.

Tensions were particularly high in Saxony in the 840s. In a desperate attempt to cling to a shred of power, Lothar retreated to Saxony after he was defeated at Fontenoy by his brothers Louis the German and Charles the Bald (841). Saxon society was still deeply divided between the freemen and slaves, who were loyal to the ancient Saxon traditions, and nobles, who were partial to the Christian order imposed by Charlemagne. According to the Frankish historian Nithard, Lothar is alleged to have exploited the divisions to his advantage, allowing the freemen and slaves to return to the customs of their pagan ancestors in return for their support.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Taeger in *Heliand und Genesis*, pp. xv–xix, xxiii; and Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen', pp. 103–5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 78–9; and *Tatian*, ed. Eduard Sievers (1892; reprint: Paderborn, 1960), p. xiii.

⁵⁸ Raymund Kottje, 'Hrabanus Maurus', in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon* 4, columns 166–96, esp. columns 168–70.

⁵⁹ Werner, 'Hludovicus Augustus', pp. 99–100, n. 369; and Hummer, 'Identity', pp. 4–5.

⁶⁰ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV/Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. and French trans. Philippe Lauer, Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen âge 7 (Paris, 1964), bk 4, c. 2, pp. 120, 122; and c. 4, pp. 130, 132; cf. *AB*, a. 841, 842; see also Eric Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt, Dynastic Politics, and Aristocratic Factionalism in the Early Middle Ages: The Saxon *Stellinga* Reconsidered', *Speculum* 70, pp. 467–501.

The politics of Old German

The movement subsided the next year after Lothar made peace with his brothers, but Louis, concerned about the stability of his northern marches, brutally suppressed Lothar's former supporters with hangings, beheadings and maimings,⁶¹ a ruthless re-imposition of authority which was followed by another spasm of Christianization marked by the importation of relics from Rome in 851.⁶²

It was against this backdrop of revolt and reconsolidation in Saxony that Louis the German installed the talented and well-connected Hrabanus into the archepiscopacy of Mainz. From this point on, there is clear evidence for a heightened interest in the vernacular in royal circles. At the Synod of Mainz in 848, Louis and Hrabanus reissued Charlemagne's earlier decree that preaching be done in the vernacular; and sometime shortly thereafter, at the royal court in Regensburg, the strange Old High German apocalyptic poem, the *Muspilli*, was written into Louis's personal copy of the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo de Symbolis contra Judaeos*.⁶³ Moreover, the circumstantial evidence of vernacular manuscripts dating to around 850 at Mainz suggests that Hrabanus had mobilized his skills on behalf of the king. Louis did not mastermind these vernacular works; he drew them up into a programme of cultural reform when he installed Hrabanus as archbishop of Mainz. The reissuing of the *Heliand* and *Genesis*, along with the preface heralding the Saxon-loving emperor, point to an effort to establish continuity between the reign of Louis the German and that of his father as part of a broader initiative to integrate the Saxon periphery into the east Frankish realm.

THE POLITICIZATION OF OLD HIGH GERMAN: OTFRID'S EVANGELIENBUCH

The vernacular activity in the years around 850 prepared the ground for the masterpiece of Old High German literature, Otfrid of Weissenburg's *Evangelienbuch*. On the one hand similar to the Old High German *Tatian* and the Old Saxon *Heliand* and *Genesis*, the *Evangelienbuch* grew out of a particular ninth-century fascination with biblical narratives. It also shared with the *Heliand* and *Genesis* a desire to convey the sense of the scriptures to those ignorant of Latin. On the other hand, Otfrid's enterprise marked a new development in vernacular composition. In contrast to the poets of

⁶¹ Problems along the northeastern frontier are well-attested, see Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 4, c. 2, p. 122; *Annales Xantenses* in *Annales Xantenses et Annales Vedastini*, ed. B. von Simson, MGH SRG (Hanover, Leipzig, 1909), a. 845, 846, 847, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 855; pp. 14–18; and AB, a. 858, p. 78; 863, pp. 95–6; 867, p. 136.

⁶² *Annales Xantenses*, a. 851, p. 17. ⁶³ Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen', pp. 98–9.

the *Heliand* and *Genesis*, Otfrid's intentions were consciously and more narrowly political: he conceived of the *Evangelienbuch* not as a biblical epic for a particular region, but as an overarching symbol of Frankish lordship.

Otfrid's life and career shed light on the local circumstances and larger political forces that stimulated the composition of the *Evangelienbuch*. The great vernacular poet was born sometime between 815 and 820 and arose from a family close by Weissenburg, probably from northern Alsace or the southern Speyergau, an intensely contested region in the second third of the ninth century.⁶⁴ We shall deal with the fragmentation of imperial unity in greater detail in the [next chapter](#), but, briefly, if Otfrid made his monastic profession at Weissenburg in 831/2, he hardly could have been ignorant of the momentous deposition of Louis the Pious in Alsace by his sons in 833.⁶⁵ If he died sometime after 870, he could not have been unaware of Louis the German's ultimately successful effort to acquire Alsace and Lotharingia by 870, an endeavour which, as we shall see, was spearheaded in part by the powerful Grimald, Louis the German's archchaplain and archchancellor, and Otfrid's own abbot at Weissenburg (833–8; 847–862/70).⁶⁶

In his prefatory letter and three dedicatory poems to the *Evangelienbuch*, Otfrid lets his readers know that he was familiar, or made himself familiar, to some of the highest-ranking figures in the east Frankish realm. The letter was addressed to Liutbert, archbishop of Mainz (863–89), Louis the German's archchaplain (870–6) after Grimald, and possibly already Otfrid's supervising abbot, since he is believed to have succeeded Grimald at Weissenburg.⁶⁷ Otfrid described the challenges of writing in an underdeveloped language and beseeched Liutbert to review the *Evangelienbuch* for publication. The dedications were made to Louis the

⁶⁴ On Otfrid's Alsatian origins, see Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 365; and below, chapter 6, pp. 203–4.

⁶⁵ On the prosopography and career of Otfrid see, in addition to the studies cited in n. 7 above, those by Wolfgang Kleiber, *Otfrid von Weissenburg*, pp. 123–60; and Uwe Ludwig, 'Otfrid in den Weissenburger Mönchlisten: Das Zeugnis der Verbrüderungsbücher von St. Gallen und Reichenau', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 135 (1987), pp. 65–86. On the date of Otfrid's profession, see Ludwig, 'Otfrid', pp. 77–81.

⁶⁶ The case for Otfrid's death after 870 is bound up with the *terminus ad quem* of the *Evangelienbuch*, see below, p. 145. On the other hand, necrological notices from some western monasteries may point to his expiry on 23 January 864/7, although this assumes that the Otfrid mentioned in these necrologies is the same poet from Weissenburg; see Haubrichs, 'Nekrologische Notizen', pp. 10–26.

⁶⁷ Otfrid, *Ad Liutbertum*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae 6: Epistolae Karolini aevi 4* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 166–9. On the letter to Liutbert, see Francis P. Magoun Jr, 'Otfrid's *Ad Liutbertum*', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 58, 4 (1943), pp. 869–90; and Gisela Vollmann-Profe, *Kommentar zu Otfrids Evangelienbuch*, pt 1: *Widmungen: Buch I, 1–11* (Bonn, 1976), pp. 24–72.

German, Bishop Solomon of Constance (839–71), who was also a royal chaplain and diplomat, and to two monks of St Gall, Hartmut, the later abbot at St Gall (872–83), and Werinbert, a notary, the caretaker of St Gall's holy objects and oral source for Notker the Stammerer's *Deeds of Charlemagne*.⁶⁸ In the letter and the poems, Otfrid also reveals that he had been educated by Bishop Solomon,⁶⁹ as well as Hrabanus Maurus.⁷⁰ Otfrid must have studied under Hrabanus at Fulda sometime in the 830s. No positive evidence can place Otfrid at Fulda at that time, but he had to have studied there after his monastic profession at Weissenburg and before the end of Hrabanus's abbacy in 841.⁷¹ His education at Fulda would neatly account for Otfrid's later impulse to compose in German since, as we have seen, major vernacular works were composed there, or at nearby abbeys, during Hrabanus's tenure. Where and when Otfrid studied with Solomon remains a mystery. A meeting at the royal court before his Fulda studies has been proposed, but this is no more than shrewd speculation.⁷²

Otfrid had returned to Weissenburg by 850 at the latest and presumably resided there for the rest of his life.⁷³ The letter to Liutbert and the poem to Solomon reveal that Otfrid must have finished his versification of the Gospels sometime between 863, when Liutbert became archbishop of Mainz, and 871, when Solomon died. Unfortunately, the extant manuscripts shed no light on the date of completion. None represent the individual, dedicatory copies sent out by Otfrid, an indication of the erstwhile existence of other manuscripts, although two manuscripts do date close to Otfrid's own lifetime.⁷⁴ The beginning of the project is more difficult to pinpoint. Haubrichs suggests that Louis the German had devised plans for the *Evangelienbuch* and the *Heliand* in the 830s, when Otfrid was at Fulda.⁷⁵ This is unlikely for the reasons already mentioned, chief among them that Louis is unlikely to have had such close contacts

⁶⁸ Otfrid, *Ad Ludowicum, Ad Salomonem, Ad Hartmuattem et Werinbertum*, in *Evangelienbuch*, ed. Oskar Erdmann, 4th reprint (Tübingen, 1962), pp. 1–3, 8–9, 266–70, respectively. On the dedications and the identities of the dedicatees, see Haubrichs, 'Studienfreunde', pp. 51–75, and n. 86, pp. 93–5; and Vollmann-Profe, *Kommentar*, pp. 1–23, 73–80. On Notker, see MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 199–229.

⁶⁹ Otfrid, *Ad Salomonem*, p. 8, lines 23–8: 'Sint in thesemo búache, thes gómo theheiner rúache;/ wórtēs odo gúates, thaz lich iu iues múate/ Chéret thaz in múate bi thia zúhti iu zi gúate./ joh zellet tház ana wánc al in ífuweran than/ Of to wírdit, oba gúat thes mannes júngoro giduat./ thaz es líwit thráto ther zúhtari gúat.'

⁷⁰ Otfrid, *Ad Liutbertum*, p. 169. ⁷¹ Ludwig, 'Otfrid', pp. 80–1.

⁷² Haubrichs, 'Studienfreunde', n. 86, pp. 93–5; and Haubrichs, 'Prosopographische Skizze', p. 406.

⁷³ Otfrid drew up two charters at Weissenburg, one c. 850 and the other in 851, *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 165 and 204, 254, respectively.

⁷⁴ See Kleiber, *Otfrid von Weissenburg*, pp. 19–98.

⁷⁵ Haubrichs, 'Althochdeutsch in Fulda und Weissenburg', p. 186.

with Fulda at that time. That said, the scope of the work and the difficulties that Otfrid described to Liutbert suggest that the idea for a vernacular *Evangelienbuch* had gestated for many years. A lengthy process is also implied by Otfrid's hint to Liutbert that 'certain brothers' who originally had inspired him to versify the Gospels had passed away.⁷⁶ How long before is unclear, but the identity of those who initially encouraged him offers some clues to the genesis of the project.

Otfrid claims that the 'certain brothers', and especially a 'venerable lady' named Judith, who were worried about the detrimental influence of 'the obscene song of the laity' and 'the play of secular songs', had persuaded him to compose the Gospels in the vernacular.⁷⁷ The identity of the brothers remains a mystery, but Judith – described by Otfrid as a *veneranda matrona* – presumably was a lay associate of the monastery. Her name implies origins among the Welf kin-group, the source of other known Judiths, although this cannot be substantiated.⁷⁸ Other evidence locates her in the west, near Paris, where Otfrid might have resided between 840 and 847 and where he might have picked up some of the theological and literary themes, fashionable among Western writers, that turned up later in the *Evangelienbuch*.⁷⁹ Latin poems written by a certain Otfrid to Hilduin, abbot of St Denis and archchaplain to Louis the Pious and Lothar, and the appearance of an Otfrid among a list of monks of St Germain-des-Prés dated to 841–7,⁸⁰ suggest that Otfrid of Weissenburg made his way to the Paris basin after the death of Louis the Pious.

Otfrid's attachment to Hilduin and Lothar's court fits the pattern of other literary talents who negotiated the turbulent years following the death of Louis the Pious and huckstered their skills at the courts of Lothar I, Charles the Bald or Louis the German. Many, mostly monks and clerics who were partial to the idea of imperial unity, attached themselves first to the court of Lothar, the eldest of the three brothers and bearer of the imperial title. This was true of Otgar, archbishop of Mainz and abbot of Weissenburg, Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda and Otfrid's teacher, and the poet Walahfrid Strabo, tutor to the young Charles the Bald and then

⁷⁶ Otfrid refers to them as brothers 'worthy of memory', *Ad Liutbertum*, p. 166; cf. Haubrichs, 'Nekrologische Notizen', p. 50. However, see Vollmann-Profe, *Kommentar*, pp. 34–5, who argues that the phrase does not mean that the brothers were deceased, but merely 'worthy of mention'.

⁷⁷ *Ad Liutbertum*, p. 166: 'Dum rerum quondam sonus inutilium pulsaret aures quorundam probatissimorum virorum eorumque sanctitem laicorum cantus inquietaret obscenus, a quibusdam memoriae dignis fratribus rogatus, maximeque cuiusdam venerandae matronae verbis, nimium flagitantis, nomine Iudith, partem evangeliorum eis Theotisce conscriberem, ut aliquantulum huius cantus lectionis ludum secularium vocum deleret.'

⁷⁸ Haubrichs, 'Nekrologische Notizen', pp. 49–51. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–55. ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–37.

Louis the German's abbot at Reichenau, all of whom were loyal to Louis the Pious and then, briefly, to Lothar in the early 840s.⁸¹

By Otfrid's own testimony, then, the concept for an *Evangelienbuch* was hatched not by Louis the German and his courtiers, but rather grew out of plans devised among a circle of acquaintances that included a few fellow monks and a woman named Judith, perhaps as early as the 840s. Otfrid and his friends might have been stirred to action by the conflicts raging among the sons of Louis the Pious, since it was typical for moralists to link catastrophes to a perceived lack of piety. Otfrid hinted at such concerns to Liutbert when he claimed that Judith and the brothers had complained to him about the popularity of pagan authors, 'by the sayings of whose works we know the world now to be in turmoil'.⁸²

Concerns about Frankish harmony also are reflected in Otfrid's stated aims. According to Otfrid, he and his associates wanted the *Evangelienbuch* to serve as a timeless symbol of Frankish achievement. Judith and the monks admired the way that pagans such as Ovid, Virgil and Lucan had versified the deeds of Romans in their own language, and they found it embarrassing that the Roman Christian authors Juvenius, Arator and Prudentius had celebrated the miracles of Christ in Latin. The Franks, they charged, had been lazy in failing to do the same in their own tongue.⁸³ Otfrid and his friends envisaged a vernacular versification of the Gospels that would both stand as a literary monument to Frankish greatness and compete for attention with worldly lays and epics. Their ambitions are evident in the text, rhyme scheme and markings on the manuscripts, which indicate that the *Evangelienbuch* could be read privately, recited to monks or sung for larger (courtly) audiences.⁸⁴

Otfrid expounded upon the theme of Frankish language and lordship in the first chapter of the *Evangelienbuch*, entitled 'Why the author composed this book in the vernacular.' The Franks, he explained, deserved a literature worthy of their glory. The Greeks and Romans had produced a beautiful and uplifting literature to praise their deeds in their own languages, languages which obey consistent grammatical rules. They had also produced elegant and mistake-free translations of the holy books.⁸⁵ Why

⁸¹ Karl Langosch, 'Walahfrid Strabo', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexicon*, vol. IV, ed. Karl Langosch (Berlin, 1953), columns 734–69, esp. columns 735–7; John McCulloh, 'Introduction: *Rabani Mauri Martyrologium*', *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* 44 (Turnhout, 1979), pp. xi–lxxxiv, esp. pp. xvii–xviii; Gerlich, 'Reichspolitik', pp. 298–310.

⁸² Otfrid, *Ad Liutbertum*, pp. 166–7. ⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁸⁴ Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, pp. 179–83.

⁸⁵ Otfrid, *Evangelienbuch*, bk 1, c. 1, p. 11, lines 13–30.

should not the Franks, he wondered, praise God in their own tongue?⁸⁶ Otfrid then voiced a sentiment current among many Carolingian intellectuals, including his mentor Hrabanus, that the Franks lorded over the latest in the succession of great empires.⁸⁷ They were, in his estimation, as brave as the Romans, more accomplished than the Greeks, superior to the Medes and the Persians in war, the equals of Alexander in conquest, and the descendants of the Macedonians.⁸⁸ The Franks were not aggressors; they merely defended their borders fiercely from hostile enemies under the wise and bold leadership of their king, who ruled justly over many conquered peoples as if they were his own.⁸⁹ The king and his thegns rode only with the aid of God because they were a pious people, who were familiar with the teachings of the Bible and strove to fulfil the word of God.⁹⁰ Otfrid concluded that he wanted to write 'our salvation, a part of the Gospels. . . in the Frankish tongue', so that the Franks would not be alone among history's great peoples in their inability to praise Christ in their native language. 'Now may all rejoice, who may be of good will and all who may be devoted in spirit to the people of the Franks, that we also experience praising Him in Frankish.'⁹¹

These imperialistic sentiments sharply distinguish the *Evangelienbuch* from the Old Saxon *Heliand* and *Genesis*. The *Evangelienbuch* was intended not for the Christianization of a conquered people, nor for the edification of a particular region, but rather was addressed to the ruling Frankish elite and anyone sympathetic to them. Consequently, Otfrid did not write in any *lingua theodiska*, a term for the Germanic vernacular which could include the Old Saxon of the *Heliand*, but pointedly in the *frenkisga zunga*, the 'Frankish tongue'. Although Otfrid's friends expressed concern about the single-mindedness of Frankish piety, they took the Christianity of the Franks for granted. Otfrid for his part seems to have thought that the Franks were good Christians; and he assumed that most of his (aristocratic) audience was familiar with the sense of the (Latin) Christian message. Only

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12, lines 31–4: 'Nu es filu manno inthilit, in sína zungun scríbit, / joh flit, er gigáhe, thaz sínaz io gihóhe: / Wánana sculun Fránkon éinon thaz biwánton, / ni sie in frénkisgon bigínnen, sie gotes lób singen?'

⁸⁷ Matthew Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', in Matthew Innes and Yitzak Hen eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 227–49, esp. 234–5.

⁸⁸ Otfrid, *Evangelienbuch*, bk 1, c. 1, lines 59–60, 81–92, pp. 12, 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, lines 61–102, pp. 12–13. ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, lines 103–12, pp. 13–14.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14, lines 113–18, 123–6: 'Nu will ih scríban unser héil, evángeliono deil, / so wír nu hiar bigúnnun, in frénkisga zungun; / Thaz síe ni wesen éino thes selben ádeilo, / ni man in íro gizungi Kristes lób sungi; / Joh er ouh íro wortó gilóbot werde háрто, / ther sie zímó holeta, zi gilóubon sinen ládota. . / Nu fréwen sih es álle, so wer so wóla wolle, / joh so wér si hold in múate Fránkono thíote, / Thaz wir Kriste sungen in únsere zungun, / joh wír ouh thaz gilébetun, in frénkisgon nan lóbotun.'

toward the end of the opening chapter did Otfrid add that his versification of the Gospels might be useful to those unable to understand the Latin scriptures.⁹² Otherwise, Otfrid and his friends were mostly disturbed by the yawning disparity between the Frankish achievement and the shameful absence of a regularized Frankish language and a worthy native literature. Their solution was to provide the Franks with the most exalted literature possible, a versification of the Gospels in Frankish that would reflect glory on the Franks and nurture a common sense of achievement.

Otfrid's celebration of Frankish greatness contrasts conspicuously with the fratricidal times in which the *Evangelienbuch* was composed. His panegyric emphasizes the prowess of Franks in defending their borders from external enemies even as the empire was wracked by internal power struggles among Louis the Pious's heirs. The recollection of Frankish achievements strikes the reader as both a wistful tribute to past glories and a shrill exhortation to the Franks – or to whoever might have been 'devoted in spirit to the Frankish people' – to put aside their quarrels and to consider their common interests. The general tone of the message and Otfrid's earlier associations with monasteries in the west suggest that he intended to reach an audience beyond east Francia. His Gospel book may have found a reception in west Francia, where Count Eccard of Autun possessed an *evangelium theodiscum* and, according to his testament of 876, bequeathed it to Bertrada, the abbess of Faremoutiers.⁹³ The vernacular Gospel was only one of a number of books the childless Eccard bequeathed to his surviving wife, sister and wide network of friends, a library which included Burgundian, Frankish and Visigothic law codes, the histories of Gregory of Tours and Paul the Deacon, saints' lives, psalters and scriptures, treatises on agriculture, medicine and military arts, and canons of church councils. Rosamond McKitterick has held up Eccard's will as evidence for widespread lay literary in the early medieval period, as well as for multi-lingualism among the higher Frankish aristocracy, since the Latin texts, the German Gospel book and the long lordship of Eccard's family, which in west Francia dated from the early eighth century, presuppose a facility with Latin and Old German, presumably as both spoken and written languages, and the Romance

⁹² *Ibid.*, lines 119–22: 'Ist ther in íro lante iz álleswio nintstánte,/ in ánder gizúngi firneman iz ni kúnni:/ Hiar hor er ío zi gúate, waz gót imo gibíete,/ thaz wír imo hiar gisúngen in frénkisga zúngun.'

⁹³ *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire*, ed. M. Prou and A. Vidier, vol. I (Paris, 1907), no. 25, pp. 59–67, esp. p. 66. On the will, see Edmund Bishop, 'A Benedictine Confrater of the Ninth Century', in Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford, 1918; reprint, 1962), pp. 362–9; and Pierre Riché, 'Les bibliothèques de trois aristocrates laïcs carolingiens', *Le Moyen Age* 69 (1963), 87–104, esp. pp. 101–3.

vernacular, at least as a spoken language.⁹⁴ While many among the higher aristocracy surely were conversant in several languages, Ernst Hellgardt has emphasized that the Carolingian Empire below the level of the greater aristocracy remained divided fundamentally by language, so that even among the elite, with the exception of those who had grown up in limited mixed linguistic zones or whose families commanded properties in the east and the west, second and third languages had to be learned as foreign tongues.⁹⁵ This might explain, he reasons, the presence of German texts in the west, which seem to have served as translations for Romance speakers attempting to learn Frankish. Still, in his estimation, the evidence for Eccard demonstrates the count's bilingualism in German and Romance, and probably that of his sister and the abbess.⁹⁶ The ability to understand German in the west 'even in quarters where', as Edmund Bishop long ago observed, 'we should least expect it',⁹⁷ may indicate that a command of the Germanic vernacular remained a potent symbol of Frankish lordship. Eccard's personal cultivation of German might have reinforced his sense of himself as a great lord among the international Frankish aristocracy, and thus set him apart from those he ruled. Whether the Gospel book he left to the abbess of Faremoutiers was Otfrid's versification or a copy of some other vernacular Bible, such as the Old High German *Tatian*, or another production that has not survived, remains hidden, but it does demonstrate the appeal of such texts to individuals and institutions in the west.

Otfrid did dedicate his work to Louis the German, claiming that it was 'for him that I wrote this book' (*themo díhton ih thiz búah*)⁹⁸ – an ascription that has been held up as evidence of royal initiative. We would do well to temper any such conclusions with the sobering fact that the king was merely one of four dedicatees. If dedications are to be taken as evidence of initiative, then why limit the credit to Louis? As we have seen, Otfrid revealed in his letter to Liutbert, which contains a franker presentation of his motives than the flattering poem to Louis, the seminal role not of the king, but of his personal associates. One suspects that the poem was intended to civilize the kingship, not to take sides in the partisan disputes of the day, because even in the royal dedication Otfrid appealed to values

⁹⁴ McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 7–22, 248–50; on Eccard and his ancestry, see Léon Levillain, 'Les Nibelungen historiques et leur alliances de famille', *Annales du Midi* 49 (1937), pp. 337–407; and 50 (1938), pp. 5–66.

⁹⁵ Ernst Hellgardt, 'Zur Mehrsprachigkeit im Karolingerreich: Bemerkungen aus Anlaß von Rosamond McKitterick's Buch *The Carolingians and the Written Word*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 118 (1996), pp. 1–48.

⁹⁶ Hellgardt, 'Mehrsprachigkeit', pp. 44–6. ⁹⁷ Bishop, 'Benedictine Confrater', p. 364.

⁹⁸ Otfrid, *Ad Ludovicum*, p. 3, line 87.

that would have been expected of any Frankish king: piety, wisdom, justice, bravery and long life. Otfrid never touted Louis as the focus of Frankish political identity, and he avoided pointed references to events in the king's career. The most he offers in the way of specifics is that Louis ruled the 'east kingdom as a king of the Franks should' and that 'his power stretched over the land of the Franks'.⁹⁹ If the poem was composed to flatter the king, it also was devised for his edification: the message of Frankish harmony was intended for Louis to ponder.

This is not to suggest that Louis the German and his court were completely uninvolved in the project. While it is difficult to extract evidence from the *Evangelienbuch*, the dedicatory poems and Otfrid's letter to Liutbert that Louis the German initiated the project, Otfrid's enterprise did take final shape after Louis and his court had embarked on a programme of cultural reform around 850. In this respect, Otfrid's work should be seen as the finest fruit of an environment which encouraged a more politicized vernacular literature. The project presumably was nurtured along by Louis's most powerful courtier, and Otfrid's direct superior, Grimald. Similar to many courtiers who rose to prominence during the second third of the ninth century, Grimald began his career in the 820s as a chaplain to Louis the Pious. In the 830s, as Louis's sons established their own courts, Grimald was lured into Louis the German's service.¹⁰⁰ In 833, Louis made Grimald, recently appointed abbot of the strategic monastery of Weissenburg by Louis the Pious, his archchancellor.¹⁰¹ Grimald served Louis as archchancellor at various times for the rest of his public life (833–40, 854/5, 856–8, 860–70) and eventually rose to the archchaplaincy (854–70). From 860 to 870, the powerful Grimald held both offices.¹⁰² In addition, Grimald was abbot of St Gall (841–70) and an undetermined third monastery.¹⁰³ Grimald's multiple abbacies have led to speculation that he administered a *de facto* 'monastic province' in the southwestern portion of Louis's kingdom.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1, lines 1–4: 'Lúdwig ther snéllo, thes wísdumes fólló,/ er óstarrichi ríhtit ál, so Fránkono kúning sea/ Ubar Fránkono lant so gengit éllu sin giwált/ thaz ríhtit, so ih thir zéllu, thiú sin giwált ell.'

¹⁰⁰ On Grimald see, Paul Kehr, 'Die Kanzlei Ludwigs des Deutschen', *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 1 (Berlin, 1932), pp. 3–30, esp. pp. 7–13; Fleckenstein, *Hofkapelle*, pp. 169–78; Dieter Geuenich, 'Beobachtungen zu Grimald von St. Gallen, Erzkapellan und Oberkanzler Ludwigs des Deutschen', in Michael Borgolte and Herrard Spilling eds., *Litterae Medii Aevi: Festschrift für Johanne Autenrieth* (Sigmaringen, 1988), pp. 55–68.

¹⁰¹ On Grimald's appointment as abbot of Weissenburg, see below, chapter 6, pp. 178–9.

¹⁰² Kehr, 'Kanzlei Ludwigs', p. 7.

¹⁰³ The third monastery probably was Ellwangen, although Niederaltaich, Mosbach and Ebersheim remain possibilities; see Geuenich, 'Beobachtungen zu Grimald', pp. 62–5.

¹⁰⁴ Haubrichs, 'Studienfreunde', pp. 75–7.

Grimald, himself a poet and the object of devotion from other literary figures, was celebrated by contemporaries for his patronage of literature. The scholar Ermenrich of Ellwangen addressed a letter to 'the most learned teacher' Grimald; Notker the Stammerer fondly recalled Grimald as a teacher in his *Deeds of Charlemagne*; and Walahfrid Strabo dedicated to him his *Visio Wettini* and *Liber de Cultura Hortorum*, and praised Grimald's pedagogical skills in the *De Imagine Tetrici*.¹⁰⁵ Probably on Grimald's advice, Louis the German appointed Walahfrid abbot of Reichenau¹⁰⁶ and Liutbert as archbishop of Mainz. Liutbert had been educated at Reichenau, and when he succeeded Grimald as archchaplain he likewise became a great patron of courtly literature.¹⁰⁷ It is fitting that Grimald emerges in Bernhard Bischoff's investigation of east Frankish manuscripts as the figure most responsible for cultural output during the reign of Louis the German.¹⁰⁸

A bibliophile, Grimald also was the force behind the growth of libraries at St Gall and Weissenburg. He is known to have showered St Gall with gifts from his extensive private collection of books and was largely responsible for the flowering of its scriptorium and library. There, Grimald was aided in his efforts by the talented Hartmut, his representative at St Gall and the recipient of one of Otfrid's dedications.¹⁰⁹ The Otfrid scholar Wolfgang Kleiber has attributed the simultaneous cultural blossoming at Weissenburg to Otfrid,¹¹⁰ but the approximate dates of this *Blütezeit* (845–70) correspond closely to Grimald's second tenure as abbot (847–70) and strongly suggest that this powerful literary patron was the agent behind the scriptorium's burst of activity. Doubtless it was Grimald who, as he had done for Hartmut at St Gall, provided the materials with which the talented Otfrid could shape local cultural output. Although the inspiration for the *Evangelienbuch* is traceable to Otfrid's associates, Otfrid must have begun composing in earnest only after 850, when he is known to have returned to Weissenburg and when Grimald began building up the library, a collection that only then began to acquire the biblical

¹⁰⁵ Peter Godman, *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 130–3, 165–6; Geuenich, 'Beobachtungen zu Grimald', pp. 56–60; and David Traill, *Walahfrid Strabo's Visio Wettini: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 2 (Bern, Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 1–11.

¹⁰⁶ Langosch, 'Walahfrid Strabo', pp. 736–7. ¹⁰⁷ Fleckenstein, *Hofkapelle*, p. 172, and p. 176.

¹⁰⁸ Bernhard Bischoff, 'Bücher am Hofe Ludwigs des Deutschen und die Privatbibliothek des Kanzlers Grimald', in Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien* vol. III, pp. 187–212, esp. p. 212.

¹⁰⁹ Bischoff, 'Privatbibliothek', pp. 194–212; see also McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 182–5.

¹¹⁰ Kleiber, *Otfrid von Weissenburg*, pp. 131–51; and Butzmann, 'Die Weissenburger Handschriften', pp. 90–1.

commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus that influenced Otfrid's exegetical digressions in the *Evangelienbuch*.¹¹¹

As a powerful courtier known to have been intimately familiar with the written vernacular and to have possessed a keen interest in Frankish history, Grimald surely would have recognized the usefulness of Otfrid's work to Louis the German. Both Reichenau, where Grimald had studied, and St Gall, where he was abbot, were centres of Old High German activity.¹¹² And Old High German glosses entered into Grimald's *vademecum* suggest a personal interest in the written vernacular.¹¹³ The *vademecum* and books in his private library also point to a preoccupation with the Frankish past. Grimald is known to have possessed a copy of Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*, Thegan's *Deeds of Louis the Pious* and Fredegar's history of the Merovingian Franks.¹¹⁴ In his introduction to the *Evangelienbuch*, Otfrid claims to have read about the mythical origins of the Franks, which are recounted in Fredegar's history:

I have indeed already read in books, I know it to be true, that they [the Franks] are by blood and esteem the family of Alexander, who so threatened the world. . . and I found in this report, that from Macedonia this people [i.e. the Franks] was separated at birth. There is not one among them who would endure that a king should rule over them – none in the world – unless it be those bred at home.¹¹⁵

Weissenburg is not known to have possessed a copy of Fredegar, but the monastery need not have for Otfrid to have got sight of it: his abbot owned a copy.

By all appearances Otfrid found an encouraging patron in Grimald whose own interest in Frankish history probably helped Otfrid refine his understanding of the *Evangelienbuch*'s broader cultural significance. Otfrid might have set out to reach all Franks, but the realities of patronage and politics drew the project inexorably into an orbit around Louis the German's court. Thus it was that Otfrid ultimately dedicated his work

¹¹¹ Kleiber, *Otfrid von Weissenburg*, pp. 133–46; Butzmann, 'Die Weissenburger Handschriften', pp. 88–91; and Haubrichs, 'Althochdeutsch in Fulda und Weissenburg', pp. 189–92.

¹¹² Heinrich Brauer, *Die Bücherei von St. Gallen und das althochdeutsche Schrifttum* (Halle, 1926); Theodor Längin, 'Altalemannische Sprachquellen aus der Reichenau', in Konrad Beyerle ed., *Die Kultur der Abtei Reichenau: Erinnerungsschrift zur zwölfhundertsten Wiederkehr des Gründungsjahres des Inselklosters 724–1924*, vol. II (Munich, 1925; reprint: Aalen, 1970), pp. 684–99; Georg Baesecke, 'Das althochdeutsche Schrifttum von Reichenau', in Baesecke, *Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 126–37.

¹¹³ Bischoff, 'Privatbibliothek', pp. 205, 210. ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 210–11.

¹¹⁵ Otfrid, *Evangelienbuch*, bk 1, c. 1, p. 13, lines 87–94: 'Lás ih iu in alawár in einen búachon ih weiz wár./sie in sibbu joh in áhtu sin Alexándres slahtu./ Ther wórolti so githrēwita. . Joh fānd in theru rédinu, tház fon Macedóniu/ther líut in gibúrti giscēindiner wúrti./Nist untar ín thaz thúlte, thaz kúning iro wálte, in wórolti nihéine, ni si thíe sie zugun héime.'

to Grimald's lord, Louis the German, and sought approval for publication from Archbishop Liutbert, Grimald's successor as archchaplain.

Otfrid's project encapsulates the salient features of Carolingian renewal: cultural reforms were closely linked to the exercise of royal power and were promulgated by the ecclesiastical institutions through which the Carolingians had extended their authority into localities throughout the empire. On the other hand, despite their universal tendencies, the reforms took shape in response to regional variation throughout the empire and were applied in accordance with local sensibilities. These divisions could be transcended in the name of a universal Christian empire, as they were for a time under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, or the various ethnicized expressions of these reforms could be activated to buttress a regional consciousness, as they were under Louis the German. The fragmentation of the empire evident in the politicization of vernacular literature was, as we shall see, a consequence of Carolingian consolidation which had strengthened the local institutional networks that could be mobilized by regional dynasts.

IMPERIAL UNITY AND REGIONAL POWER

By all appearances Carolingian rulers from Charles Martel to Louis the Pious had united the Frankish world under their stern lordship. Potential rivals and factions had been suppressed, the fortunes of great families were made or unmade according to the needs of royal power, abbots and bishops became partners in rulership and, perhaps most importantly, Carolingians were victorious in battle. Carolingian rulers also presided over a sweeping reform of the Frankish church and society which reached its apogee in Louis the Pious's reform councils (816–19) and his elegant conception of a 'Christian Empire'.¹

Working to undermine imperial unity were a number of structural tensions. The transition from expansion under Charlemagne to defence under Louis the Pious diminished opportunities to acquire the spoils necessary for maintaining the patronage networks that sustained the imperial edifice.² As the flow of plunder and tribute dissipated, aristocrats began to vie for *honores* and wealth within the empire. It probably is no coincidence, as Timothy Reuter has observed, that this competition for internal wealth was marked by a noticeable uptick in allegations of abuse of church property.³ These complaints were not driven by antagonism between clerics and the laity; they were a predictable byproduct of the political empowerment of abbeys during the Carolingians' rise to power and the elaboration of a flexible system of property transfers that bound kin-groups, monks, kings and imperial aristocrats to one

¹ Mayke De Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer', in McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, pp. 622–53, esp. 629–34; Josef Semmler, 'Renovatio Regni Francorum: Die Herrschaft Ludwigs des Frommen im Frankenreich 814–829/830', in Godman and Collins eds., *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 125–46, esp. pp. 128–42.

² Timothy Reuter, 'The End of Carolingian Military Expansion', in Godman and Collins eds., *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 391–405.

³ Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages 800–1056* (London, New York, 1991), pp. 46–8.

another.⁴ Only in the late tenth century did monks come to the epiphany that lay folks were at the root of their problems.

In the Carolingian period, the course of reform and complaints of abuse were inseparable from the exigencies of factional politics. By the second third of the ninth century, aristocratic factions were able to exploit divisions within the royal family and mobilize their grievances through Louis the Pious's sons. Whereas the transmission of leadership within the ruling family dating back to the days of Charles Martel had been uncomplicated by the survival of a single heir due to opportune retirements or deaths, Louis had three sons, Lothar, Louis and Pippin, and after 823 a fourth, Charles, each of whom – in conformity with Frankish tradition – agitated for a kingdom of his own.⁵ These tendencies were aided and abetted by the nature of Carolingian power which, to the extent that it possessed an institutional dimension, was mediated by an imperial aristocracy and a universal church which were neither so imperial nor universal as they appeared. Factionalism was endemic, even beneath the façade of Charlemagne's Empire,⁶ because the power of both ecclesiastical and lay lords depended upon the cultivation of local wealth and the domination of local networks. While ecclesiastical institutions and the aristocracy could provide the ballast for an impressive imperial authority, the lack of an overarching governmental superstructure and the accumulation of powers by local potentates and institutions meant that the regionalization of power in some form was inevitable.

In Alsace, a hotly contested region during the second third of the ninth century, we can observe the strains between imperial unity and regional power that propelled the transformation of the Carolingian world. The area was home to the resurgent Etichonids, whose most powerful exponent, Hugo of Tours, attempted both to enhance his ancestral position in Alsace and to maintain his dispersed imperial *honores* by supporting

⁴ On Carolingian monism, see Karl F. Morrison, *The Two Kingdoms: Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought* (Princeton, 1964), pp. 37–45; and Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 226–41. On the ubiquity and normalcy of lay abbots in the reign of Louis the Pious, see F. Felten, 'Laienäbte in der Karolingerzeit: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Adelherrschaft über die Kirche', in Borst ed., *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel*, pp. 397–431, esp. pp. 406–8; D. Geuenich, 'Gebetsgedenken und anianische Reform: Beobachtungen zu den Verbrüderungsbüchern der Äbte im Reich Ludwigs des Frommen', in Raymund Kottje and Helmut Mauer eds., *Monastische Reformen im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert*, Vorträge und Forschungen 38 (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 79–106. On lay abbots generally, see Franz Felten, *Äbte und Laienäbte im Frankenreich: Studien zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1980).

⁵ Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft*, pp. 559–67; see also François-Louis Ganshof, 'Some Observations on the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817', in François-Louis Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (Ithaca, 1971), pp. 273–88, esp. pp. 278–9.

⁶ Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen*, pp. 40–71.

Lothar's bid for imperial authority. From the perspective of Hugo's career, we can explore the interplay of unifying impulses, regional pressures and the Carolingian family politics that eroded the prospects of imperial aristocrats. Alsace also was home to highly developed monastic blocs which were mobilized by Louis the Pious's sons as they attempted to consolidate their respective kingdoms. In the end, these property-holding institutions, and the sheer weight of the local networks that they could command, played a pivotal role in the shift from unified empire to regional kingdoms.

THE ETICHONID CONUNDRUM: LOCAL POWER
AND IMPERIAL HONORES

The Etichonids, let us recall, lost their offices with the passing of Count Eberhard and Duke Liutfrid in the 740s, and with the emergence of the first Carolingian king, Pippin III. Even though other collateral lines of the family persisted, Pippin, and then Charlemagne, ignored Etichonid candidates and appointed their own men as counts. Despite their lack of titles, Etichonids still wielded considerable wealth and influence in Alsace because of their extensive holdings and because of the numerous monasteries they patronized. Consequently, they remained a family of potential and continued to suggest themselves as candidates for imperial *honores*. In the latter years of his reign, Charlemagne raised up a certain Etichonid named Hugo and made him count in Tours. Hugo of Tours, as he is known in the literature, quickly advanced in the imperial service:⁷ in 811, Charlemagne sent him with Bishop Haito of Basle and several Italian magnates to Constantinople to negotiate peace with the Byzantine Empire.⁸

In the early years of Louis the Pious's reign, Hugo rose to become one of the most powerful men in the empire. He received from Louis the women's monastery of St Julien d'Auxerre and probably acquired at this time an additional countship in Sens.⁹ In 821, he arranged for his daughter Irmingard to marry Lothar, Louis's eldest son and imperial heir;¹⁰ in 824, he fought successfully in a campaign against the Bretons; and two years later, he occupied a place of dignity behind the Empress Judith at the baptism of the Danish king.¹¹ By 826, Hugo arguably was the most

⁷ On Hugo of Tours, see Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', pp. 7–21; Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 163–8.

⁸ *ARF*, a. 811, p. 133. ⁹ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 163–4.

¹⁰ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 34, pp. 402, 404.

¹¹ Ermoldus Nigellus, *In Honorem Hludowici*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini* 2 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 5–79: bk 4, p. 826, lines 421–6; cf. Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', p. 11.

formidable magnate in the empire.¹² The count's influence is also evident in the advantageous marriages of two other daughters: Bertha, who married Gerard, count in Paris and then in Vienne; and Adalais, who married twice, first into the powerful Welf family, and then to Robert the Strong, from whose descendants sprang the Capetian dynasty of France.¹³

Charlemagne, ever attentive to his royal prerogatives and power, granted the count *honores* in places such as Tours, where Hugo – so far as is known – had little traditional influence, rather than in Alsace, where the count's family had been entrenched for over a century. As Hugo gathered *honores* hither and yon, he was careful to nurture his ancestral ties to Alsace. Naming patterns within his immediate family suggest a conscious effort by Hugo to associate himself and his progeny with illustrious Etichonids of the past. Louis the Pious's biographer Thegan reports that Hugo was descended from Duke Adalrich, the late Merovingian duke in Alsace, an ancestry Thegan presumably knew about because Hugo had proudly publicized the connection.¹⁴ Hugo's own name could be traced to the old Etichonid stock, as it had once designated one of Adalrich's four sons; and the count christened one of his own sons Liutfrid, which recalled the last Etichonid duke in Alsace. This revival of the names of ducal ancestors, and Hugo's growing favour, might be connected to the first appearance in 816 of the term *ducatus Alsacensi*, the 'dukedom of Alsace', in the two diplomas of Louis the Pious to the Etichonid foundation at Murbach.¹⁵

Hugo also held property in Alsace at or near places where his Merovingian-era ancestors once had made donations or sales. In 820, he exchanged property in five locations in Alsace for all of Weissenburg's possessions in Dettwiller on the upper Zorn, which included 'XIII farm-houses and whatever is seen to pertain to them, with the exception of the *mancipia*'.¹⁶ Two of the properties were located in the northern Alsatian villages of Preuschof, where Hugo gave up twenty-three *jurnales* of farmland and five cartloads of hay, and Niederbronn, where he reserved for himself the local church but gave up his forest property and the buildings, *mancipia*, pasturage, lands and waters that pertained to it. The forest property may have been Hugo's share of the same 'lordly forest' where nearly a century before Duke Liutfrid had met with the abbot of Weissenburg to confirm that his father, Duke Adalbert, had ordered that

¹² His closeness to Louis might explain the emperor's preference for hunting in the Vosges; cf. *ARF*, a. 817, p. 147; 821, p. 155; 825, pp. 166–7.

¹³ Wildorf, 'Les Etichonides', p. 10; Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 168–9.

¹⁴ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 28, p. 216. ¹⁵ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 436, 437.

¹⁶ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 69.

nine of the duke's men, who were residing on donated property in Preuschdorf and Görsdorf, should render 'dues which they yielded to us by law, so that neither we nor our subordinates will require at any time *freda*, *stuafo* or *haribanus* [i.e. fines and dues], except that they shall discharge this payment to the monastery'.¹⁷ The other three were located at Valff, where Hugo transferred to the monks three farmhouses, twenty-four *jurnales* of farmland and the forest district there; and at Barr and Froschheim, where he relinquished control of his vineyards. All three were near the old Etichonid foundation of Hohenburg and were clustered tightly around Bourgheim, where Duke Liutfrid once had donated property to Weissenburg.¹⁸ Other than a stated desire to acquire a concentrated holding, the charter gives little insight into the reasons for the exchange. Hugo might have had an eye on Erchangar, Louis's count in western Alemannia who, two years later, with the emperor's blessing, exchanged some of his Alsatian holdings, most of them near Strasburg, for properties belonging to the diocese of Strasburg in the old Etichonid village of Blienschwiller.¹⁹ Whatever Hugo's motivations, the transaction must have been important to him because he used it to publicize his Alsatian interests at an imperial assembly. At Quierzy, he had this essentially private exchange grandly confirmed by the emperor and affirmed by twenty-nine witnesses, who included the bishop of Strasburg, Abbot Einhard, a relative named Etich (i.e. Adalrich), and ten counts from throughout the empire. The exchange was then submitted to local implementation and approval: in Niederbronn the transfer was supervised by two figures and witnessed by eleven locals; the arrangements in Preuschdorf were overseen by eleven locals and witnessed by eleven more; and the provisions at Barr and Froschheim were instituted by three locals.

Hugo's determination to maintain his potent combination of imperial *honores* and ancestral power go a long way toward explaining the controversial second phase of his career as a conspirator against the emperor. Hugo's relationship with Louis the Pious first soured in 827 when a campaign the count helped to lead against Saracens in northern Spain ended in disgrace amid accusations of weakness and incompetence.²⁰ At a public assembly the following year, Hugo was condemned for cowardice. Louis pardoned him from death but stripped him of his *honores*.²¹ Hugo was able to salvage a career thanks to his family name, ancestral property,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 12. ¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 10–11.

¹⁹ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', p. 25, n. 148.

²⁰ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 41, pp. 438, 440.

²¹ *Ibid.*, c. 42, pp. 442, 444; cf. Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', p. 12.

and his closeness to his son-in-law and the emperor-in-waiting, Lothar. These were no mean assets, and they played a crucial role during Lothar's revolts against his father in 830 and 833.

The principal narratives of the events of the 830s, almost universally critical of Lothar's attempts to depose his father, have not been kind to Hugo. Thegan's biography of Louis the Pious, a highly partisan and retrospective account composed in the latter years of the emperor's rule, essentially blamed the count and other of Lothar's advisors for the mistakes of Louis's reign.²² Hugo he singled out for special derision, famously dubbing him 'the timid' for his failed campaign, and claiming that the count, frightened by the prophecies of his own household, was afraid to leave his home.²³ The Astronomer, whose biography of Louis was written shortly after the emperor's death (840) but before Lothar's defeat at the hands of his brothers at Fontenoy (841), was less polemical. The Astronomer was keener to celebrate the emperor and his admirable mercy, rather than to use the biography as cover for partisan attacks.²⁴ Nonetheless, Hugo and the treacheries of which he was a part presented the irresistible occasions with which to dramatize Louis's characteristic clemency. Nithard, by his own admission, began his chronicle as a partisan defence of Charles the Bald's rights vis à vis a predatory Lothar in the aftermath of Louis the Pious's death.²⁵ Hugo was several years dead by then, but as a prelude Nithard rehearsed the troubles of Louis the Pious's reign and Hugo's unsavory role as advisor to Lothar. Nithard added a new wrinkle to the depiction of Hugo, who now was cast as a power-hungry aristocrat out to monopolize power for himself.

The partisanship of these accounts must be borne in mind as we assess Hugo's seditious behaviour. The revolt of 830 was ignited by a number of intersecting grievances: hostility to Bernard of Septimania, whose allies had gained from Hugo's and Matfrid's loss of *honores* in 828; Pippin's agitation for a freer hand in Aquitaine; and Lothar's

²² Ernst Tremp, 'Thegan und Astronomus, die beiden Geschichtsschreiber Ludwigs des Frommen', in Godman and Collins eds., *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 691–700, esp. pp. 691–5; and Innes, 'Politics of Humour', pp. 135–6, 153. See also on Thegan, Ernst Tremp, *Studien zu den Gesta Hludowici imperatoris des Trierer Chorbischofs Thegan*, MGH Schriften 32 (Hanover, 1988); and Stuart Airlie, 'Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious', in Godman and Collins eds., *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 191–204.

²³ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 28, p. 216. ²⁴ Tremp, 'Thegan und Astronomus', pp. 695–7.

²⁵ Janet L. Nelson, 'Public Histories and Private History in the Work of Nithard', *Speculum* 60 (1985), pp. 251–93, esp. pp. 252–5, reprinted in Janet L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, Ronceverte, W. V., 1986), pp. 195–237; see also Elina Screen, 'The Importance of the Emperor: Lothar I and the Frankish Civil War, 840–843', *Early Medieval Europe* 12, 1 (2003), pp. 25–51, esp. pp. 27–31.

antipathy to provisions for Charles the Bald, who was born to Louis the Pious and his second queen, Judith, in 823, and for whom in August 829 Louis the Pious carved out a realm made up of Alsace, Alemannia, Raetia and parts of Burgundy.²⁶ The primary accounts place a greater emphasis on the hostility to Bernard and the racy accusations of his alleged adultery with Judith; only Nithard and Thegan, both retrospective, add that the grant to Charles was the source of fraternal resentment.²⁷ This does not mean that the provisions for Charles played no role, only that they were secondary to the Bernard affair, at least for some chroniclers. The versions that offer the most nuanced accounts, the *Annals of St Bertin* and the *Astronomer*, locate the rebellion among a group of disgruntled lay and ecclesiastical aristocrats (which included Hugo and Matfrid), and then claim that it attracted the support of Pippin and, belatedly, Lothar. Left unexplained in these two versions is Lothar's motivation, which we have to retrieve from Nithard, who alleges that Lothar was upset by the grant to Charles. Nithard must be treated with some caution here, since in 841 he had an irresistible motive to project Lothar's hostility to the idea of an independent kingdom for his half-brother back to Charles's birth, and thus to depict Lothar as consistently deceitful. On the other hand, if we set this rhetorical framework aside, we can see that Nithard's account – which provides valuable observations found nowhere else but which has been deemed by virtue of the author's closeness to the court in the 820s and 830s worthy of attention²⁸ – offers some shrewd insights. He tells us that Lothar initially consented to the plans for Charles but went back on the agreement only after Hugo and the other magnates complained.²⁹ When considered alongside the other accounts, Nithard's suggests that the rebellious faction was driven by a range of concerns, many of which, but by no means all, found a focus in the opposition to Bernard; and that Lothar was pried loose from his loyalty to his father in part by complaints to him about the arrangements for his half-brother.

Why then – if we assume his sincerity, rather than fiendishness – was Lothar initially acquiescent to the grant for Charles in 829? The provisions probably elicited little hostility from Lothar because from other sources it can be inferred that Louis the Pious took great care not to offend the dignity of his three elder sons. Although the oft-cited *Annals of Xanten*

²⁶ Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, New York, 1992), pp. 75–90.

²⁷ *AB*, a. 830, p. 103; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 3, pp. 8, 10; Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, cc. 35–6, pp. 220–2; and *Astronomer*, *Vita Hludowici Imperatoris*, cc. 44, 45, pp. 456, 458, 460, 462.

²⁸ Nelson, 'Public Histories', pp. 269–70. ²⁹ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 3, p. 8.

claims that Charles was given a *regnum*, and three St Gall charters of 830, 831 and 833 are dated to the reign of Charles,³⁰ other sources remain vague about the status of the grant. Nithard claims that Charles was given a portion of the realm (*portio regni*); Thegan says only that Charles received 'Alemannic and Raetian land and some part of Burgundy' (*terra Alemannica et Redica et pars aliqua Burgundiae*); and Walahfrid referred to the grant generally as an *honor*.³¹ The St Gall charters, it should be said, raise as many questions as they answer. All three are dated to the 16th, 17th and 19th years of Louis's reign but cannot agree on Charles's status or when his reign began. The charter of 4 April 830 is dated to the third year of the reign of 'King' Charles, which would place the beginning of his lordship, improbably, in 827. The other two, which transpired on 10 June 831 and 27 March 833, do not divulge a title for Charles and are dated to the third and second years of his reign, respectively. These would locate the beginning of Charles's reign in 828 and 831, rather than in 829. Clearly Charles's status provoked a good deal of disagreement or confusion.

A glance at the neglected *Annals of Weissenburg* might explain the reason: here it is claimed that Charles was set up as 'duke' over the stipulated territories.³² This modest work, which runs intermittently from 763 to 846 and is outclassed by the more vivid canonical accounts, has not received the attention it perhaps deserves as a witness to Charles's earliest prospects. The annals were copied in the tenth century, when they were written into the margins of an Easter table for 763 to 858, which in turn fronted a martyrology, also composed at Weissenburg in the tenth century. The annals were drawn up originally at Metz and then acquired by Weissenburg, probably in the mid-ninth century. Its editor, Adolf Hofmeister, noting the attentiveness of the annalist to the birth, ordination and death of Drogo, as well as to the accession and passing of Carolingian kings, inferred an 'original composition in the circle of Drogo and Louis the Pious'.³³ By virtue of its nearness to the upper echelons of power, the *Annals of Weissenburg* can be considered a knowledgeable witness to the arrangements for Charles in 829, or at least to the

³⁰ *Annales Xantenses*, a. 829; *Urkundenbuch Sanct Gallen*, nos. 330, 337, 343; cf. Kasten, *Königssöhne*, p. 188, n. 186, and pp. 362–3; and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 86–7. Nelson herself remains equivocal about the nature of the provision for Charles, generically calling it a 'grant' or an *honor*.

³¹ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 3, p. 8; Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici Imperatoris*, c. 35, p. 220; Walahfrid Strabo, *De Imagine Tetrici*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini* 2 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 370–8, esp. p. 376, line 181.

³² *Annales Weissenburgenses (Drogoniani) 763–846*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, in Adolf Hofmeister, 'Weissenburger Aufzeichnungen vom Ende des 8. und Anfang des 9. Jahrhunderts', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 73 (1919), pp. 401–21; esp. pp. 417–20.

³³ Hofmeister, 'Weissenburger Aufzeichnungen', pp. 414–16.

perception of them in the eyes of an important faction. While Nithard's recollection of Lothar's acquiescence and then resistance reinforces his general depiction of Lothar as a double-crosser, we might surmise from the *Annals of Weissenburg* that Lothar initially was supportive because Charles was made clearly subordinate as a duke. It may be that by awarding a lesser dignity to Charles, Louis sought to preserve the solemn promise of the *Ordinatio* of 817 so as not to offend the sensibilities of the elder sons, but at the same time provide something for the 6-year-old Charles. Why grant a kingdom to a child who might not survive to adulthood anyway and risk riling the grown sons? The subsequent, more partisan accounts seem to have obscured the brilliant subtlety of Louis the Pious's original arrangement.

So why did Lothar resist his father in 830, ostensibly out of hostility to the grant for Charles? The problem, as Nithard reveals, was not Lothar, but his supporters, in particular Hugo, who had reason to be upset not only with Bernard, but also with Charles's new lordship. Nithard does not bother to convey Hugo's concerns, preferring instead to depict the count as pathologically perfidious; however, it is easy enough to infer that the provisions made for Charles jeopardized Hugo's cosy situation in Alsace: as long as Alsace was under his son-in-law's direct authority, Hugo could more easily reinforce his local power with imperial *honores* (if he could recoup them), and vice versa. By 830, an anxious and hemmed-in Hugo was staring into a bleak future: having been stripped of his dignities in the west, he was now undercut in his ancestral homeland. Not surprisingly, he reacted with the desperation of a threatened man.

With ominous brevity, the entry in the *Annals of Weissenburg* for 829 took note of the brewing storm:

Charles was ordained duke over Alsace, Alemannia and Raetia. That same year, three days before the nones of December, a great light appeared in the east at dawn. A conspiracy against the emperor.³⁴

Urged on by Hugo, Matfrid and others, Lothar and Pippin (of Aquitaine, third son of Louis the Pious) seized control of the empire.³⁵ The coup quickly collapsed and the emperor condemned the agitators to death, though with characteristic mercy he pardoned Lothar and his men.³⁶ In the ensuing division in 831, Charles benefited most. His dukedom was transformed into a kingdom and expanded to include the Frankish

³⁴ *Annales Weissenburgenses (Drogoniani)*, a. 829, p. 419.

³⁵ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 36, pp. 220, 222.

³⁶ *AB*, a. 831, p. 4; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 3, p. 12.

territories along the upper-Meuse and Moselle rivers, while Lothar and his supporters were relegated to Italy.³⁷ At this point, Janet Nelson has observed, Charles became a serious rival to his brothers as heir to the legacy of Charlemagne.³⁸ We might also add that of the three St Gall charters dated to the reign of Charles, the third, the one that took place in 833, seems to have pinpointed the significance of this division: it was 831, not 829, that was decisive for Charles's future prospects.

If the partition was designed to give greater security to Charles, it did little to relieve the tension inherent in the arrangements for him, and matters soon came to a crisis again. The smouldering opposition erupted when the emperor undercut Pippin by having some of the Aquitainian nobility swear allegiance to Charles. Hugo and the other agitators of 830 capitalized on the situation and convinced Lothar to seize power again.³⁹ Lothar, Louis the German and Pippin assembled their supporters at Rotfeld in Alsace and confronted their father. Alsace probably was chosen because it offered a convenient location where Louis, who was coming from Worms, and Lothar, who was arriving with the pope from Italy, could meet. Be that as it may, it surely was a boon to Lothar that the assembly took place on Hugo's ancestral turf in Alsace, where the sons were able to bribe away the emperor's supporters, depose their father and partition the empire among themselves.⁴⁰ Lothar took his father and Charles into custody, retreated north to Marlenheim, and then crossed the Vosges at the Saverne Gap and made his way to Metz and finally Soissons.⁴¹

Nithard alleges that Lothar then manoeuvred to rule the empire at the expense of his full brothers.⁴² Behind Lothar's plans stood Hugo, who reputedly was vying to become the second man in the empire.⁴³ Hugo's precise motivations are unknown, and we should be wary of Nithard's subtle parallelism here, which neatly pairs Hugo's thirst for unrivalled power among the aristocracy with Lothar's suspected lust for sole rule. Although Nithard might have exaggerated the situation, it is still reasonable to assume that Hugo, as any ambitious aristocrat, would have moved to maximize his power. The events of 833 had left him well-positioned as a consequence of the events of 833 to recoup his lost *honores* and, if Lothar could limit the power of his brothers, to reassert his influence in Alsace, which had been taken from Charles but awarded to Louis the German at

³⁷ *Capitularia* vol. II, no. 194, pp. 21–4, esp. p. 24; cf. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 89–90.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90. ³⁹ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 4, pp. 14, 16.

⁴⁰ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 48, pp. 472, 476, 478; Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 42, pp. 228, 230; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 4, p. 16; *AB*, a. 833, pp. 8–11.

⁴¹ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 48, pp. 478, 480.

⁴² Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 4, p. 17. ⁴³ *Ibid.*

Rotfeld. In the end, Hugo's bid came to nothing. The junior brothers, reportedly alarmed at Lothar's perceived high-handedness, helped restore their father. Lothar again submitted to his father, Hugo again was pardoned for conspiracy, and both retreated to Italy.⁴⁴ Hugo revived a career south of the Alps, where he became duke of Locate and lavished gifts on the church of Monza.⁴⁵ He died several years later in 837 when a plague struck in northern Italy, a calamity that Lothar's critics predictably interpreted as divine punishment on rebels without a just cause.⁴⁶

ALSACE AND THE EAST FRANKISH KINGDOM

Hugo failed to maintain his local dominance and imperial stature in part because his schemes were ripped asunder by the powerful forces unleashed by the arrangements of 831. This division, which altered Charles's prospects, had an even greater impact on the immediate fortunes of Louis the German. Prior to 831, Louis lorded over the modest sub-kingdom of Bavaria.⁴⁷ He does not appear to have been hostile to the arrangements for Charles in 829, he supported his father during the crisis of 830⁴⁸ and he was rewarded handsomely for his loyalty with an expanded kingdom. Thegan claims that Louis and his brothers were incensed from the start in 829,⁴⁹ but his is the only account to say so, and it may be that Thegan unconsciously conflated 829 with 831 and the cluster of grievances that led to the spectacular revolt of 833. Writing in 836/7, after the various reworkings of the imperial order, Thegan would have been tempted to dramatize Charles's initial grant as the root issue. If Louis had been bothered in 829, he sensibly kept his grievances to himself, perhaps in the hopes of a territorial reward from his grateful father, as Nithard insinuates.⁵⁰ Whatever Louis's ambitions might have been in 830, his strategic imperatives were transformed by the revolt and the ensuing settlement. In 831, Louis was granted the territories west of the lower Rhine in the Maas basin, and all the territories east of the Rhine, with the exceptions of Alemannia, which Charles retained, and Franconia.⁵¹

On parchment, Louis now enjoyed an enormous increase in territory, and with that came a substantial augmentation of his prestige, but in reality he had been granted a kingdom that was nearly impossible to rule.

⁴⁴ *AB*, a. 834, pp. 11–15. ⁴⁵ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 164.

⁴⁶ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 56, pp. 512, 514; Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 55, p. 251.

⁴⁷ Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 28–9. ⁴⁸ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 36, p. 222.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 35, p. 220. ⁵⁰ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 3, p. 12.

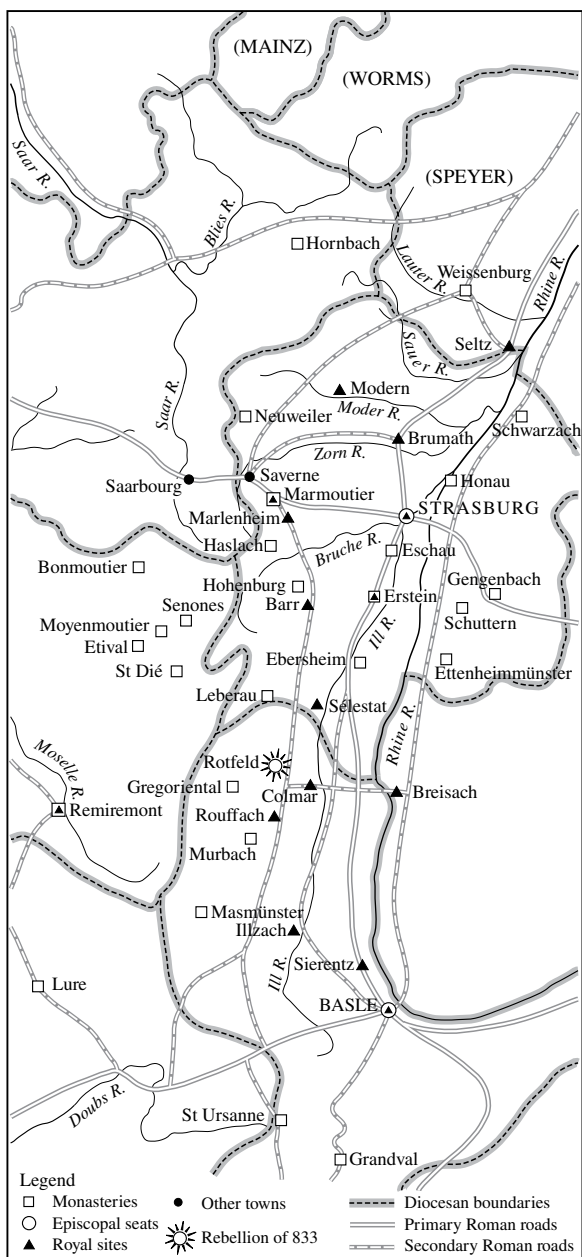
⁵¹ *Capitularia* vol. II, no. 194, p. 24.

So awkward is the configuration of this kingdom, one is tempted to conclude that the emperor intentionally had created a sub-realm which never could be turned into an independent base of power. The basic problem was that without control of the royal residences and wealthy monasteries of southern Alemannia, and the prosperous mid-Rhine cities and districts, Louis the German would have been unable to travel easily between the two poles of his kingdom, between Bavaria to the southeast and the territories to the northwest. He could try the more direct cross-country route through Thuringia, but the interior of his kingdom simply was too underdeveloped for that to be a practical solution. When Louis rebelled in 840, for example, and was driven by his father from Frankfurt into Thuringia, the *Annals of Fulda* observed that he made his way back to Bavaria, through Slavic lands, only 'with great difficulty'.⁵² Eric Goldberg's careful reconstruction of Louis's movements shows that when Louis circulated his kingdom, he made use of the network of old Roman roads along the Rhine and the Danube.⁵³ From Bavaria, he typically travelled west along the Danube through southern Alemannia to Basle and then turned north, following the Rhine to Frankfurt. We only add that for this northward phase of the journey, Alsace was crucial. As Louis travelled north along the Rhine, he would have found the western Alemannic territories to his right much less hospitable than the Alsatian lands to his left (see map 5). By contrast with the rugged, underdeveloped Black Forest region east of the Rhine, Alsace to the west was rich in the fiscal properties, royal residences and well-endowed monasteries necessary for supporting a king and his retinue between Basle and Speyer.⁵⁴ Chief among these were the monasteries of Murbach, Gregoriental, Marmoutier, Weissenburg and Honau, and the royal complexes at Sierentz, Sélestat and Colmar in the south, Marlenheim, Strasburg and Saverne in central Alsace, and Brumath and Seltz in the north. By contrast, to the east of the Rhine there was but one modest cluster of royal estates near the Kaiserstuhl, as well as several monasteries founded by Pirmin, none of which ever developed into a major centre and all of which fell under the auspices of the diocese of Strasburg. In sum, efficient rule of the east Frankish territories required control of Alemannia, Alsace and the mid-Rhine cities.

⁵² *AF*, 840, pp. 30–1.

⁵³ Eric Goldberg, 'Creating a Medieval Kingdom: Kingship, Court, and Nobility under Louis the German, 826–876', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia (1998), pp. 328–49.

⁵⁴ Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 49–55, and map 5, which graphically demonstrates the imbalance. See also Thomas Zotz, 'Das Elsass – ein Teil des Zwischenreichs?', in Hans-Walter Herrmann and Reinhard Schneider eds., *Lotharingia – ein europäische Kernlandschaft um das Jahr 1000* (Saarbrücken, 1995), pp. 49–70, esp. p. 55.



Map 5 The monasteries, royal centres and roads in the upper-Rhine region

Although Goldberg reconstructed Louis's itinerary largely from diplomas issued after 843, when they become more numerous, Louis's rebellious disposition in the year after the division of 831 indicates that he instantly grasped the unfavourable geopolitics.⁵⁵ In 832, he devised a two-stage campaign to rectify his handicaps. He reportedly planned to seize Alemannia first and then, from there, to capture portions of Francia, i.e. the Rhenish territories above Alemannia.⁵⁶ In this endeavour he was encouraged by a cluster of Bavarian aristocrats who also entertained interests in the mid-Rhine region.⁵⁷ The emperor got wind of the plot, marched across the Rhine, and forced his namesake to retreat from Worms. Father and son were reconciled to one another in Bavaria, but Louis's fundamental grievances remained unresolved, and he joined his brothers in deposing their father the next year at Rotfeld. Not surprisingly, he extracted as the price for his support the strategic additions of Alsace, Alemannia and Franconia.⁵⁸ From 833 on, Louis styled himself as 'the king in east Francia'.⁵⁹

In retrospect, Louis the Pious's attachment to the provisions he had made for Charles was ill-considered. The emperor must have come to recognize the problem, because after his restoration he left Louis with his gains and abandoned the effort to make Alemannia the hub of a sub-kingdom for Charles. In 837, he provided Charles with a more workable kingdom based on the Frankish territories between the Meuse and the Seine.⁶⁰ The division noticeably left Alsace and Alemannia to Louis, although it created another problem because it awarded Charles some districts west of the lower Rhine which had been assigned to Louis in 831. When Louis contested the arrangements the following year, the emperor decisively stripped him of all his possessions except Bavaria and resumed direct control of 'Alsace, Saxony, Thuringia, Austrasia and Alemannia'.⁶¹ With Louis disgraced and Pippin having died that same year, Louis the Pious reworked the division yet again. In 839, he divided the empire into eastern and western halves for Charles and Lothar. Charles now received, in addition to the territories awarded to him in 837, Pippin's Aquitaine and territories in southern Burgundy; Lothar received Italy, everything

⁵⁵ Eric Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876* (Ithaca, 2006), pp. 62–3.

⁵⁶ *AB*, a. 832, pp. 5–7. ⁵⁷ Cf. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire*, pp. 57–77.

⁵⁸ *Regesta Imperii* 1, 1352 a; cf. Reuter, *Germany*, p. 50.

⁵⁹ On Louis's titles, see Eggert, *Ostfränkisch-deutsche Reich*, pp. 15–25, 245–58.

⁶⁰ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 6, pp. 24, 26; *AB*, a. 837, pp. 22–3; cf. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 95–6.

⁶¹ *AB*, a. 838, pp. 24, 26; 839, pp. 26–7; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 1, c. 8, p. 34; cf. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire*, pp. 87–91; and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 99–101.

between the Meuse and the Rhine, Louis's territories east of the Rhine, as well as the 'dukedom of Alsace', the lands between the Vosges and the Moselle, and the districts between the Vosges and the Jura.⁶² The division thus acknowledged the importance of Alsace to whomever was assigned the east Frankish territories.

ALSACE IN THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The emperor passed away on 20 June 840, and within weeks his sons had renewed their quarrels. After three years of anxious campaigning, the brothers and the great magnates met at Verdun to divide the spoils by treaty. The brothers partitioned the counties, abbacies, bishoprics and royal estates of the empire into three equal shares; however, the accounts indicate that the division also was made with a view toward creating contiguous kingdoms.⁶³ Each brother began with a hub – Lombardy for Lothar, Bavaria for Louis and Aquitaine for Charles – and then to them were added adjacent lands. Generally speaking, Lothar took Italy, Provence, Burgundy and, as the bearer of the imperial title, the Carolingian heartlands between the Meuse, the Rhine and the Scheldt. Charles claimed the western territories, and Louis the lands east of the Rhine as well as the critical left-bank districts of Mainz, Worms and Speyer.⁶⁴ Conspicuously missing from Louis's kingdom was Alsace, which had gone to Lothar.⁶⁵

Lothar's middle kingdom would prove to be the most ephemeral of the three, though not because it lacked political logic. Lothar possessed imperial charisma, had the firm allegiance of Italy and could claim long-standing connections to the aristocracy in the Frankish heartlands between the Meuse and the Rhine.⁶⁶ Where Alsace was concerned, he could command the firm support of Count Erchangar as well as his Etichonid in-laws.⁶⁷ Moreover, Lothar could invoke his own affinal ties to the old Etichonid dukes to establish rapport with local monasteries. At the monastery of St Stephen's in Strasburg, Lothar professed his kinship to the founding Etichonid dukes when in 845 he confirmed the charters of 'our illustrious progenitor Duke Adalbert'.⁶⁸

⁶² *AB*, a. 839, pp. 31–2. ⁶³ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 4, cc. 1, p. 118, 120; 3–6, pp. 124–40.

⁶⁴ *AB*, a. 843, pp. 44–5; *AF*, a. 843, p. 34.

⁶⁵ On the place of Alsace in the middle kingdom, see Zotz, 'Das Elsass', pp. 57–64.

⁶⁶ Screen, 'The Importance of the Emperor', pp. 31–50.

⁶⁷ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 28–9.

⁶⁸ *Diplomata Lotharii I.*, ed. Theodor Schieffer, *MGH D Karol.* 3 (Berlin, Zurich, 1966), pp. 1–365: no. 90, p. 221. On Lothar's affinal ties, see Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', p. 8, n. 7.

If the Etichonids still harboured a desire to revive the family's glory under Hugo, the shift to regional kingdoms and the curtailing of Lothar's right as emperor to intervene in his brothers' kingdoms⁶⁹ had effectively crippled any plans. The evidence suggests that, although Hugo's successors maintained the Italian lordship for a time, henceforth they pursued a strategy as regional aristocrats and tended to their traditional seat of power in Alsace. In 849, Hugo's son Count Liutfrid petitioned his brother-in-law Lothar for privileges for Grandval, the monastery in the Jura that had been subjected to Etichonid control by Duke Adalrich almost two centuries before.⁷⁰ Two weeks later, the emperor and his Etichonid spouse Irmingard organized a new monastery in the empress's ancestral homeland at Erstein, near Strasburg.⁷¹ After the middle kingdom was partitioned following Lothar's death in 855, Count Liutfrid assumed a role – analogous to that which his father had filled under Lothar I – as royal councillor to Lothar II in the northern kingdom.⁷²

The middle kingdom proved ephemeral in the long run because Lothar I's three sons failed to produce viable heirs and were outlived by Louis and Charles. Of course, no one knew that was going to be the case in 855 when Lothar's sons, Louis, Lothar II and Charles, partitioned the middle kingdom among themselves.⁷³ Lothar II's kingdom possessed real strengths: a loyal and powerful Frankish aristocracy, the prestigious Carolingian centres of Aachen and Metz, a coordinated episcopacy; and Lothar himself, by virtue of his youth, could well have been expected to outlive his powerful uncles.⁷⁴ In the short term, the prospects for the success of Lothar II's northern kingdom – basically the northern territories of the middle kingdom that fell into the area between the Alps, the North Sea, the Meuse and the Rhine – were imperilled by unfavourable geopolitics. Flanked on either side by the larger east and west Frankish kingdoms, the northern kingdom was susceptible to disruption by Charles the Bald and Louis the German, both of whom nursed long-standing claims to portions of the kingdom. Charles had once been allotted the territories between the Meuse and the Scheldt, and Louis had once held the territories between the Moselle and the Vosges, as well as Alsace, which he still needed to rule his east Frankish kingdom most efficiently. The burden of Carolingian unity, which in theory still existed, meant that both would take more than that if they could get it. Powerful aristocrats in this recently divided empire still claimed holdings in other

⁶⁹ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 132–3. ⁷⁰ *D LoI*, no. 105. ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, no. 106.

⁷² Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', p. 22. ⁷³ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 542.

⁷⁴ Stuart Airlie, 'Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II', *Past and Present* 161 (1998), pp. 3–38, esp. pp. 9–10.

kingdoms and frequently agitated for kings, who were for their part faced with a diminution in royal resources and all too willing to listen, to grasp for portions, or all, of neighbouring kingdoms. The conflicts among the kings between 843 and 876 were driven by the exigencies of Carolingian politics.

Predictably, the death of Lothar I and the succession of his three sons provoked a round of competition for control of the middle kingdom, in particular for the northern third that belonged to Lothar II. Lothar's fundamental vulnerability turned out to be his inability to produce a legitimate heir, his controversial efforts to divorce his allegedly sterile queen, Theutberga, and the opportunity this presented to his uncle Charles to intervene in Lotharingian affairs. Lothar had first wed, in some sort of traditional ceremony, Waltrada, a woman from a middling aristocratic family in lower Lotharingia. When Lothar became king in 855, he dissolved this weaker union and contracted an official royal marriage to Theutberga, who was a member of a more powerful family and therefore more advantageous to him as queen.⁷⁵ Lothar reportedly took an immediate dislike to Theutberga, soon accused her of incestuous relations with her brother as a reason to divorce her and had his bishops recognize his marriage to his original love Waltrada and thereby legitimate their son Hugo as his heir.

Neither Charles nor Louis had an interest in seeing Lothar produce a legitimate heir, or so it is believed. This certainly was true for Charles, but it was not so obvious in the case of Louis, who at least initially seems to have taken a different approach. Charles's disposition is much better known because of the behaviour of his bishops, who directly challenged the divorce and successfully lobbied Pope Nicholas to nullify the marriage to Waltrada and declare Theutberga as Lothar's rightful wife. As Stuart Airlie's perceptive exploration of the case shows, the west Frankish bishops and the pope in effect ended up questioning Lothar's fitness to be king at all.⁷⁶ Needless to say, Lothar could not long be expected to command the support of his bishops, several of whom had been removed by the pope, or his aristocracy, under such intolerable circumstances. The disposition of the enigmatic Louis is much more difficult to fathom. In Timothy Reuter's view, he took a lower-key approach in the hope, ultimately to be realized, that Charles's overt interference would drive Lothar into a closer alliance.⁷⁷ This is true in broad outline, but a closer look at the situation suggests that Louis did more than bide his time; he displayed an active sympathy with Lothar which paid off, as it were, in the consolidation of his influence in Alsace.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–17.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–4.

⁷⁷ Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 71–3.

Alsace occupied an ambivalent position in Lothar's kingdom. It had been part of his father's settlement at Verdun, and then passed in 855 to Lothar, who for his part does not appear to have taken much personal interest in the area. His itinerary reveals a brief stay in 866 when he visited the old Merovingian palace at Marlenheim.⁷⁸ Lothar spent most of his time around Aachen or in Lotharingia; when he did circulate the southern portions of his kingdom, he travelled from Metz down the Moselle valley to Toul and along the Meuse to Langres.⁷⁹ Lothar commanded the allegiance of Ratold, the bishop of Strasburg, who, although technically under the provincial authority of the archbishop of Mainz, participated in several combined west Frankish and Lotharingian synods and was a member of the contingent of Lotharingian bishops who supported Lothar's divorce and recognized the marriage to Waltrada.⁸⁰ Lothar also remained close to his Etichonid relatives, whose solid support perhaps made minding Alsace less of a personal priority. His maternal uncle Count Liutfrid, the son of Hugo of Tours, emerged as one of Lothar's chief advisors and appears prominently in the narrative accounts as an ambassador to Charles the Bald and then to the pope to plead the king's case for divorce during the early 860s.⁸¹ Liutfrid's death in 865/6 may in part have prompted Lothar's lone visit in 866 to Alsace, where he met Liutfrid's son, Hugo, and granted a number of properties around the strategic Burgundian Gate to the monastery at Grandval in the Jura.⁸² Lothar's reliance on Etichonid support can also be inferred from the name of Lothar and Waltrada's son. Airlie points out that the name Hugo, a non-royal designation among the Carolingians, probably indicates that Lothar did not at first intend Waltrada to be his queen or for Hugo to be his public heir.⁸³ Be that as it may, the name suggests other plans. We need look no further for the source of inspiration for Hugo's name than Lothar's maternal kin, the Etichonids, who had made the appellation prestigious in the region. Lothar might not at first have planned for Hugo to succeed him as king, but he apparently intended to equip his son with an influential lordship, probably in Alsace, which he in fact arranged to make Hugo duke over in 867.⁸⁴

Lothar's personal authority in Alsace appears to have been limited to the central and southern areas. The few donations of Alsatian properties to

⁷⁸ *Regesta Imperii* 1, 1310. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1275 b–1325 e.

⁸⁰ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 555, 561, 564; and *AB*, a. 864, p. 112.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, a. 862, pp. 93–4; 864, p. 117; cf. Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', pp. 21–3; and Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 171–2.

⁸² *Diplomata Lotharii II*, ed. Theodor Schieffer, *MGH Diplomata Karolinorum* 3, 2 (Berlin, Zurich, 1966), pp. 367–491: no. 28.

⁸³ Airlie, 'Private Bodies', pp. 17–18. ⁸⁴ *AB*, a. 867, pp. 136–7.

Weissenburg after 855, every one of which is dated to the reign of the east Frankish king, reveal that Louis the German held sway in the north.⁸⁵ Early in Lothar's reign, Louis's authority extended down even to Strasburg, for in 856 at Frankfurt he confirmed for Ratold of Strasburg the immunity and protection that had been granted to the diocese by Louis the Pious.⁸⁶ Immediately after Lothar I's death, Ratold presumably saw Louis as the better bet to guarantee the diocese's rights; and Louis for his part had an obvious, and continuing, strategic reason to want to consolidate influence in the environs of Strasburg. Whether Louis at this time was acting out an aggressive policy for portions of Lothar's kingdom is unclear, although he reportedly alarmed Lothar, who initially aligned himself with Charles. Lothar's fears seemed to be justified when, in 858, Louis marched his men through Alsace during his bold but unsuccessful bid for Charles's kingdom.⁸⁷

Whatever his precise motives, it is clear enough that by 860 Louis could command considerable influence in portions of Alsace, and that during the next several years Lothar and Louis would work out a cooperative and overlapping authority in the region. Unlike Charles, Louis appears to have been sympathetic to Lothar's divorce. The absence of east Frankish protest is one indication, but positive evidence can be inferred from Karl Schmid's brilliant analysis of the probable meeting between Lothar, Louis and Charles of Provence at Remiremont in December 861, an occasion precipitated by worries that Charles the Bald was manoeuvring to annex Provence.⁸⁸ Vestiges of a meeting can be worked out from an ad hoc cluster of names entered into the memorial book of Remiremont in late 861. The entry is divided into three interrelated groups, one devoted to the attending kings, which included two of Louis's sons, a second to the immediate families of Lothar and Louis, and a third to the two kings' retinues. Among the latter was Louis's archchaplain, Grimald, the abbot of St Gall and Weissenburg, who had been elevated to the archchancellorship just the year before. This made Grimald Louis's most influential advisor during the troubled 860s, a shrewd choice given Grimald's Lotharingian roots and his kinship to Thietgaud, the archchancellor's brother and the archbishop of Trier, who was one of the most enthusiastic proponents of Lothar's divorce.⁸⁹ Schmid reasoned that the entry

⁸⁵ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 49, 156, 272.

⁸⁶ *Diplomata Ludowici Germanici, Karlomanni, Ludowici Junioris*, ed. Paul Kehr, *MGH Diplomata Regum Germaniae ex Stirpe Karolinorum* 1 (1932; reprint: Berlin, 1956), no. 75.

⁸⁷ *AF*, a. 858, p. 50.

⁸⁸ Karl Schmid, 'Ein karolingischer Königseintrag im Gedenkbuch von Remiremont', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 2 (1968), pp. 96–134.

⁸⁹ Geuenich, 'Beobachtungen zu Grimald', pp. 57–8.

reflected not only evidence of a meeting over the fate of Provence, but that the second cluster points to Lothar's efforts, apparently successful, to gain recognition for Waltrada and Hugo from the other attending kings.⁹⁰ Both wife and son were listed within a group which included Louis's queen, Emma, as well as women who were either daughters or siblings of Lothar and Louis, two of whom, Berta and Irmingard, may have been Lothar's daughters by Waltrada. The mingling of the two households, and the placement of Waltrada and Hugo on a par with other family members, appears to reflect their acceptance.

The meeting did transpire at a crucial stage in Lothar's divorce process, adding to the likelihood that Lothar would have been keen in late 861 to line up support for Waltrada and Hugo. The previous year, in early June 860, Charles the Bald, Louis and Lothar had met at Koblenz and worked out a non-aggression pact in which the two uncles promised to respect each other's kingdoms and those of their nephews, and to provide for supporters marooned in rival kingdoms.⁹¹ The agreement in effect closed the chapter on Louis's failed invasion of west Francia two years before. For his part, Lothar was fresh from his divorce, which effectively had been achieved at a synod and an assembly at Aachen the previous January and February, respectively, when Theutberga was forced to confess her alleged crimes of incest and consigned to a convent.⁹² The outcome of the council, and the support of its decisions, may have given Lothar confidence that his divorce would not be challenged. Unfortunately for him, the case and the method of disgracing Theutberga had aroused considerable consternation among some Lotharingians, who appealed to Hincmar, Charles the Bald's powerful bishop of Reims, for expert opinion on the matter. In response, in the autumn of 860 Hincmar penned his trenchant critique of the proceedings in his tract, the *Divorce of Lothar*.⁹³ Although the text never circulated, it captures the general west Frankish preoccupation with the affair, a concern which was expressed by Prudentius in the *Annals of St Bertin* as early as 857 and then again, more gravely, in 860.⁹⁴ This attitude contrasts starkly with the principal east Frankish narrative, the *Annals of Fulda*, which did not take notice – or could have cared less? – until 863, when Pope Nicholas intervened and the divorce developed into an international crisis.⁹⁵

The unease and outright hostility emanating from west Francia presumably lay behind Lothar's distrust of Charles, which emerged in the

⁹⁰ Schmid, 'Ein karolingischer Königseintrag', p. 127.

⁹¹ *Capitularia* vol. II, no. 242, pp. 153–8; cf. Schmid, 'Ein karolingischer Königseintrag', p. 114.

⁹² Airlie, 'Private Bodies', pp. 8–9. ⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13. ⁹⁴ *AB*, a. 857, p. 74; 860, p. 82.

⁹⁵ *AF*, a. 863, pp. 57–8.

months after Koblenz, and his reputed grant of Alsace to Louis later that year.⁹⁶ The cession, unmentioned in the *Annals of Fulda*, was reported in the *Annals of St Bertin*, which surely exaggerated the situation, because seven years later the *Annals*, having been taken over by Hincmar after Prudentius's death in 861, show Lothar again giving Alsace to Louis.⁹⁷ A private donation to Gregoriental in 865, which was dated to Lothar's reign, and Lothar's visit to Marlenheim the following year demonstrate well enough that Alsace by no means had been ceded, at least not wholly, in 860.⁹⁸ What is more probable is that in 860 Lothar simply conceded Louis's *de facto* authority in the north and agreed to coordinate their rule in Alsace, perhaps as part of his broader offensive to curry support for his plans. The memorial book of Remiremont illuminates the active cooperation between the two kings that began to take shape in the autumn of 860: among the wider circle of associates named in the entry for 861 was a certain Christian, who probably was the same named count in two of Louis the German's diplomas dated to 861 and 868, who appears among Lothar's diplomats to Rome in 865 and who witnessed the pact at Koblenz.⁹⁹ The arrangements for Alsace in 860, then, do not expose a weakened and imperilled Lothar,¹⁰⁰ at least not yet; rather they point to his creative and by all appearances successful engagement of Louis.

Lothar's relationship with Uncle Louis began to shift after 863, when events definitively slipped from his control. Once it became clear that the marriage to Waltrada was a lost cause and that Lothar's prestige had been dealt a severe blow in the process, Louis became more overtly predatory. The *Annals of St Bertin* bear witness to the double-dealing between Lothar, Charles and Louis, as the latter two feigned friendship with Lothar, yet planned the fate of the middle kingdom among themselves. Lothar sought a rapprochement with Charles, perhaps put off by Louis's suddenly changed attitude, and warning, along with Charles, that he should go to Rome and seek forgiveness for his sins.¹⁰¹ Lothar suspected a ruse to seize his kingdom, worries that became real in the winter of 866/7 when Charles, on the pretext of support for his brother Louis, who was suppressing the rebellion of his son, Louis the Younger, threatened to march his army to Metz.¹⁰² Louis saw through the scheme, a veiled invasion of Lothar's kingdom, and sent messengers to inform Charles that the revolt had been settled and not to come to Metz. Charles obliged, but not before reaching Verdun, where

⁹⁶ *AB*, a. 860, pp. 83–4. ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, a. 867, pp. 136–7.

⁹⁸ *Regesta Alsatiæ*, no. 571; on Marlenheim, see above, p. 172.

⁹⁹ Schmid, 'Ein karolingischer Königseintrag', pp. 105–6.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Janet L. Nelson trans. and annotation, *The Annals of St Bertin* (Manchester, 1991), p. 93, n. 6.

¹⁰¹ *AB*, a. 865, pp. 116–17. ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, a. 866, pp. 132–3.

even the sympathetic Hincmar observed with some disapproval that the army decamped and began to harass the city and plunder the countryside. Not surprisingly, Lothar grew close to Louis again, and in 867 at Frankfurt, in the presence of his uncle, Lothar granted the 'dukedom of Alsace' to Hugo and put his son and his kingdom under Louis's protection.¹⁰³ Henceforth, Louis became dominant throughout Alsace. The next year Bishop Ratold of Strasburg participated in the east Frankish synod at Worms;¹⁰⁴ and in 869, on the cusp of his fatal excursion to Rome to win recognition of Waltrada from a new pope, Hadrian, Lothar gave a cluster of his own southern Alsatian properties to Louis the German's daughter, Bertha, abbess of St Felix and Regula in Zurich, who bequeathed them to her convent upon her death in 877.¹⁰⁵ The grant, Lothar proclaimed, was made so that Bertha, together with Waltrada, might broker a pact (*amicitia*) with her parents, presumably so that Louis, as the ever-vigilant Hincmar observed the previous year, might accept Waltrada in the event of success in Rome.¹⁰⁶ Bertha's efforts appear to have borne some fruit, because Lothar reportedly secured a promise from Louis not to meddle in his kingdom during his absence.¹⁰⁷

Lothar made promising headway with Hadrian, but on his return was stricken by fever and succumbed, in Hincmar's damning estimation, to the judgement of God. Charles moved quickly to annex Lothar's entire kingdom with two bold strokes. He had himself acclaimed king of Lothar's realm in Metz and spent the next month itinerating the territories between the Moselle and the Meuse, presumably to reinforce the support he had received from the magnates and bishops of the dioceses of Trier, Metz, Verdun and Toul.¹⁰⁸ His circuit also reflected the support he did not receive, namely from the Etichonids in Alsace which, according to the recent arrangements made at Frankfurt, was under Louis's protection. Upon the news that Louis was near death, Charles 'hastened to Alsace' to receive the crucial support of Count Liutfrid's son, Hugo, as well as that of a certain Bernard.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately for Charles, Louis quickly recovered and forced his brother to divide the spoils at Meerssen (870). In the ensuing partition, Charles received most of the territories west of the Moselle, the western portion of the Ardennes and the territories west of the lower Meuse. Louis received the territories between the lower Rhine and the Meuse, the eastern portion of the Ardennes, Alsace and the lands west of the Vosges up to the Moselle, including some lands west of the upper Meuse.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, a. 867, pp. 136–7. ¹⁰⁴ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 578.

¹⁰⁵ *D LoII*, no. 34; *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 596; and *Diplomata Karoli III*, ed. Paul Kehr, *MGH Diplomata regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum* 2 (Berlin, 1936–7), no. 8; cf. *Regesta Imperii* I, 1322 b.

¹⁰⁶ *AB*, a. 868, p. 150. ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, a. 869, p. 153. ¹⁰⁸ *AF*, a. 869, pp. 69–70.

¹⁰⁹ *AB*, a. 869, p. 168. ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, a. 870, pp. 172–4.

Louis the German's victory in Alsace at first glance is puzzling. The area for decades had been under the authority of Lothar I and Lothar II, and Louis does not appear to have commanded Etichonid support, except perhaps in the few years leading up to Meerssen. While Etichonid support was helpful, and did help to reinforce the authority of the two Lothars in the Vosges region, Alsace was more than the sum of Etichonid interests. There were other pockets of support that, even though they might dovetail from time to time with Etichonid ambitions, were able to be courted to other ends. The family of Count Erchangar, for example, whose lordly interests spanned the upper Rhine at least until Verdun in 843, when the family cast its lot with Lothar, experienced a diminution of its influence east of the Rhine when Alemannia passed to Louis the German.¹¹¹ The family's awkward position in Alemannia, as well as a falling-out between Lothar and Erchangar in 854 when Lothar supported the monastery of Leberau in a dispute between the count and the monks, left Erchangar ripe for wooing.¹¹² Not long after the dispute, and shortly after Lothar II is said to have ceded Alsace to Louis (860), Louis arranged for his son Charles to marry Erchangar's daughter Richgarda (861/2), thereby extending his influence into Alsace by marriage alliance.

More crucial, however, were monasteries, the amalgamated networks of monks and patron families that an enterprising dynast could activate to leverage support in a contested area. While the narrative sources give the impression that the fragmenting of the Carolingian Empire can be reduced to the machinations of Louis the Pious's heirs and a few great aristocrats, we can construct from other sources a high-stakes struggle which often devolved upon the successful control of property-holding institutions. We can catch a vivid glimpse of this process at the pivotal frontier monastery of Weissenburg.

Before 830, Weissenburg's abbots traditionally had been agents of Carolingian imperial authority. As we have seen, Ermbert was bishop of Worms and close to Pippin and Charlemagne. His successor Justolf (before 797–810) was also a bishop, most likely of Ascoli Piceno.¹¹³ Little is known of Justolf, but he probably had been appointed to this central Italian bishopric as part of Charlemagne's broader policy to install figures from north of the Alps who might help to consolidate Lombard Italy

¹¹¹ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 30–1. ¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 28–31.

¹¹³ Hofmeister, 'Weissenburger Aufzeichnungen', p. 410, n. 9; Franz Staab, 'Speyer im Frankenreich (um 500 bis 918)', in Wolfgang Eger ed., *Geschichte der Stadt Speyer* vol. II (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 163–247, esp. p. 190 and p. 223, n. 167.

under his son Pippin. Justolf was succeeded by Bernhar (811–26) and Folcwig (826–after 830), both bishops of Worms, who revived the tradition, temporarily disrupted by Justolf, of the dominance of the Rhenish bishoprics over Weissenburg. Bernhar, we have already observed, was Carolingian by blood and close to Charlemagne, having been sent by the emperor to a synod in Rome in 809 to seek advice on the theology of the Holy Spirit. Little is known of Folcwig, but he presumably owed his appointments to Louis the Pious, who visited Worms in 828¹¹⁴ and again in 829, the year of the fateful assembly that equipped Charles the Bald with his first lordship.¹¹⁵

Subsequent abbatial appointments at Weissenburg, which was located in the strategic borderlands of the kingdoms assigned to Charles and Lothar, inevitably were drawn into the partisan struggles between Louis the Pious's sons. The problem was that although the monastery proper was situated in the Speyergau, which was under Lothar's control, it held properties throughout Alsace, which lay in Charles's earliest kingdom. The situation was further complicated, as we have seen, by Louis the German's interest in annexing the area to his nascent east Frankish kingdom. As part of his plans, in the aftermath of the rebellions against Louis the Pious in the early 830s, Louis the German attracted the loyalty of Grimald, the abbot of Weissenburg, who in 833 became Louis's archchancellor and, in time, his archchaplain.¹¹⁶ Grimald apparently had been installed at Weissenburg by Louis the Pious, because the first extant charter of his abbacy, conducted on 18 August 833, three months after the emperor's deposition, was dated to the reign of Louis the Pious, presumably a sign of persisting solidarity.¹¹⁷ The best guess is that Grimald had been appointed by Louis the Pious sometime after November 830, the last charter of the previous abbot;¹¹⁸ and he was attracted to Louis the German's court between 18 August and 19 October, when he first appeared as archchancellor.¹¹⁹ Presumably, Grimald's descent from a prestigious family in the Saare-Moselle region made him an attractive figure to woo and suggested him as someone who might spearhead Louis the German's 'policy of expansion in Lotharingia'.¹²⁰ It is unclear whether Louis had sketched out an ambitious plan of western expansion at this early stage, since modern historians may be anticipating Louis's successful acquisition of portions of Lothar II's kingdom at Meerssen. In the early 830s, Grimald's connections in the

¹¹⁴ *ARF*, a. 828, p. 177. ¹¹⁵ *Regesta Imperii* 1, 868.

¹¹⁶ On Grimald's appointment to the abbacy of Weissenburg, see above, chapter 5, n. 98.

¹¹⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 158. ¹¹⁸ See Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 360. ¹¹⁹ *D LG*, no. 13.

¹²⁰ Geuenich, 'Beobachtungen zu Grimald', pp. 57–8, and p. 68.

crucial mid-Rhine districts and the influence in Alsace that came with control of Weissenburg were reason enough. Not surprisingly, in his capacity as abbot, Grimald began to consolidate his lord's authority in Alsace and seems to have extended it west of the Vosges, where a bloc of Weissenburg's traditional patrons resided. A donation charter, which was transacted at Saarlouis and records the donation of properties in the Saar basin by five men in 838, was dated to the reign of Louis the German and thus testifies either to the recognition of or an attempt to establish the authority of the east Frankish king in the Saargau.¹²¹

Louis was not the only brother to perceive Weissenburg's strategic importance. When the emperor stripped Louis of all his territories but Bavaria in 838, Grimald was supplanted by Otgar, the powerful archbishop of Mainz and chaplain to Louis the Pious, a figure friendlier to the emperor.¹²² The appointment probably had been engineered by Lothar, who had taken Otgar into his service as early as 834 when, according to Thegan, Otgar spied for Lothar on a delegation that Louis the German had sent to the then deposed emperor.¹²³ As the recipient of the eastern half of the empire in Louis the Pious's final division of 839, Lothar was in a strong position to see that the abbacies left exposed by Louis the German's retreat were filled by his friends. For Lothar, Otgar's appointment proved valuable. In the scramble for power that ensued upon the emperor's death in 840, Otgar became one of Lothar's most dogged supporters and a formidable focus of opposition to Louis the German in Franconia.¹²⁴ Nithard, whose relentless denunciation of Lothar extended to anyone who supported the emperor, claims that Otgar 'hated' Louis passionately.¹²⁵ In the end, just as Charles the Bald eventually had to sell out the loyal Nithard as he pursued peace with Lothar,¹²⁶ Lothar abandoned the steadfast Otgar when he was forced to cede the mid-Rhine districts of Speyer, Worms and Mainz to Louis at Verdun. The agreement left the archbishop of Mainz and the abbot of the Speyergau monastery of Weissenburg stranded in the unfriendly confines of the east Frankish kingdom. Unlike Hrabanus Maurus, who initially lost his abbacy at Fulda because of his support for Lothar but eventually regained Louis's favour, Otgar kept his archbishopric but never was reconciled to the east Frankish king. His deep roots in the mid-Rhine region doubtless helped him retain his ecclesiastical offices, but most decisive was Otgar's episcopal authority, which made him virtually invulnerable to removal. Louis,

¹²¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 273. ¹²² On Otgar, see Gerlich, 'Reichspolitik'.

¹²³ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 47, p. 240.

¹²⁴ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 3, cc. 4, p. 100; 7, p. 114.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, bk 2, c. 7, p. 58. ¹²⁶ Nelson, 'Public Histories', pp. 273–82.

who might remove an abbot when it was politically expedient to do so, never once removed a bishop, apparently out of respect for apostolic sovereignty, and did not interfere with Otgar's oversight of his province.¹²⁷ The king and the archbishop kept their distance, and it may testify to Otgar's residual influence that Louis was unable to convene a major east Frankish council until after Otgar's death in 847.¹²⁸

As the lord of an east Frankish realm that included the mid-Rhine districts, Louis the German was well positioned to control any abbatial appointments in the Speyergau. Upon Otgar's death, Louis seized the moment and reinstalled Grimald as abbot of Weissenburg. Grimald shortly began to rekindle his lord's influence among the monastery's patrons to the south and west. This required some nimbleness because, although Louis controlled the mid-Rhine districts to the north and east of Weissenburg, Lothar was sovereign over Alsace and southern Lotharingia, where Weissenburg held extensive estates. In other words, transactions made in the former would have been conducted under Louis's authority, while those in the latter were supposed to be undertaken under Lothar's. In the first year of Grimald's second abbacy, Weissenburg received a gift of property in southern Lotharingia which was dated, as one might expect, to the eighth year of the reign of 'our lord emperor Lothar'.¹²⁹ However, this soon ceased to be the case. From 851 on, the date of the next extant charter, transactions undertaken in Alsace and southern Lotharingia recognized Louis the German as the sovereign authority.¹³⁰ That is, at some point between 847 and 851 – four to eight years before Lothar's death, and long before Meerssen in 870 – Grimald had established Louis's authority among Weissenburg's patrons living in the middle kingdom.

This manoeuvring for advantage in Alsace and southern Lotharingia coincided with the burst in literary activity at Weissenburg. As we have seen, the monastery's scriptorium was responsible for Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, a work which was shaped in no small measure by its having been composed as Louis vied for control of this strategic border region. The scriptorium also was responsible for another great project, the cartulary of Weissenburg, which compiled the monastery's claims to properties made vulnerable by the disputes over the middle kingdom, and reflects an effort to consolidate the support of Weissenburg's patrons in Alsace and southern Lotharingia and to mobilize them on behalf

¹²⁷ Boris Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche und die Reichskirche im Ostfränkischen Reich (826–876)*, *Historische Studien* 470 (Husum, Germany, 2002), pp. 235–48; Gerlich, 'Reichspolitik', pp. 310–16.

¹²⁸ Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 95–7. ¹²⁹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 200 (847).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 204, 254 (851).

of Louis the German during the tumultuous second third of the ninth century.

RECORDING WEISSENBURG'S PROPERTY FROM VERDUN (843)
TO MEERSEN (870)

The ninth century witnessed the production of a number of cartularies, most of which were compiled in the east, notably at Fulda, Freising, Honau, Mondsee, Passau and Weissenburg.¹³¹ Investigators have offered a variety of reasons for the sudden and selective appearance of these compilations: Anianian monastic reforms, imperial administrative reforms or the policies of Louis the German.¹³² These codices did share the purpose of memorializing patrons and, at some level, of reforming the administration of monastic estates, but beyond that their appearance exclusively in the east cannot be reduced to a single explanation. Whereas the earliest cartularies at Fulda and Freising were outgrowths of ecclesiastical reorganization in response to reforms,¹³³ the cartulary project at Weissenburg was intimately connected to Louis the German's territorial ambitions.

The first clue that the cartulary of Weissenburg was an outgrowth of Louis's political aspirations is the approximate date of compilation. The latest charter in the cartulary is dated to 862, and might indicate an assembly that year or shortly thereafter, but the transaction was entered last and therefore probably after the cartulary had been produced.¹³⁴ On codicological grounds, the editors have dated the assembling of the codex to sometime between 855 and 860, which turn out to be interesting dates indeed.¹³⁵ These stand at the end of Grimald's successful efforts to extend Louis's lordship over Weissenburg's patrons in Alsace and southern Lotharingia. They also coincide with the first years of Lothar II's reign, during which Louis advanced his bold bid for west Francia through Alsace. There are good reasons to suspect that the cartulary was completed at the end of this five-year window because the latest charter listed in the register to the codex transpired on 7 October 860.¹³⁶ This date, it turns out, coincides with the meeting between Louis and Lothar II, when

¹³¹ Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. I, pp. 101–11; Geary, *Phantoms*, pp. 81–98.

¹³² Dopsch, *Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, vol. I, p. 110. On the argument for imperial administration, see Metz, *Reichsgut*, pp. 44–6; and on the possible connection to Louis the German, Geary, *Phantoms*, p. 87.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88–96. See also Stefan Esders and Heike J. Mierau, *Der althochdeutsche Klerikereid: Bischöfliche Diözesangewalt, kirchliches Benefizialwesen und volkssprachliche Rechtpraxis im frühmittelalterlichen Baiern*, MGH Studien und Texte 28 (Hanover, 2000), pp. 78–182.

¹³⁴ *Trad. Witz.*, no. 272. ¹³⁵ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Witz.*, p. 40. ¹³⁶ Cf. *Trad. Witz.*, no. 49.

Lothar reportedly ceded Alsace to Louis, a summit which must have occurred between September and November, or around the posited *terminus ante quem* of the cartulary.¹³⁷ As we have seen, this report, from the *Annals of St Bertin*, distorted the situation and probably points to a more modest recognition of Louis the German's supremacy in northern Alsace. The date also coincides with the addition of the archchancellorship to Grimald's duties, a position which the reigning archchaplain reacquired after a two-year hiatus sometime after Koblenz in June and before 20 November, when Grimald appeared again with the title.¹³⁸ His reappointment was part of a broader shift of policy away from the aborted acquisition of west Francia and toward Louis's re-engagement of the Lotharingian situation.¹³⁹ The cartulary project thus fits neatly within the redirection of royal aims under Weissenburg's abbot, Grimald, and may have been prepared in advance of the meeting with Lothar as a demonstration of the monastery's holdings and, by extension, Louis's dominance in northern Alsace.

Other clues can be found in the organization of the cartulary itself. As Glöckner and Doll point out, the codex never was intended to be comprehensive.¹⁴⁰ Similar to the cartulary of Fulda and the charters of St Gall, it was organized by district; however, by contrast with those two collections, and with the cartulary of Freising, the Weissenburg codex was more limited in geographical scope. It contains records of property located almost exclusively to the south and the west of the monastery, mainly in Alsace and in two districts of southern Lotharingia, the Saargau and the Saulnois,¹⁴¹ even though other vestigial records, the *Brevium Exempla* and the *Liber Possessionum*, reveal that in the ninth century the monastery must have possessed vast holdings to the north and the east in the Speyergau, the Wormsgau and the Ufgau. The examples listed in the *Brevium Exempla* – a capitulary which, as we have observed, prescribed methods for recording lands given out in *precaria* or as benefices – were drawn from Weissenburg's properties in the Wormsgau.¹⁴² The *Liber Possessionum*, a 'book of possessions' compiled at Weissenburg in the thirteenth century, summarizes aggregate holdings in the surrounding districts dating back to the Carolingian

¹³⁷ Böhmer narrowed the meeting between Lothar and Louis to sometime between June and November in Louis's itinerary and to sometime after September in Lothar's; *Regesta Imperii* 1, 1443 and 1291 a–3, respectively.

¹³⁸ Kehr, 'Kanzlei Ludwigs', p. 12.

¹³⁹ On Louis's policy shift, see Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 49–54, and Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 137–42, 197–201.

¹⁴⁰ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 42–4. ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁴² *Capitularia*, vol. I, no. 128, pp. 250–6, esp. 252–4.

period.¹⁴³ Although most of the 315 entries survey tenth- and eleventh-century holdings, the first 25 offer a partial survey of ninth-century holdings in the Wormsgau and the Speyergau, and a few in the Ufgau.¹⁴⁴ When we consider that Weissenburg was located in the Speyergau, and that its leadership continually came from the bishops of Speyer, Worms or Mainz, we might reasonably infer that the greatest concentration of the monastery's property was located in these northern districts between the Lauter and the Rhine.¹⁴⁵

In addition to their geographical preoccupations, those who assembled the Weissenburg codex were noticeably interested in records of precarial transactions. This prompted Glöckner and Doll to conclude that the cartulary was not even intended to be a comprehensive reckoning of properties in Alsace and southern Lotharingia, but rather was assembled to keep track of lands over which the monks only had tenuous control.¹⁴⁶

Of the 125 places in Alsace and the 63 in the Saargau and the Saulnois mentioned in the cartulary, barely two dozen appear in the monastery's tenth-century holdings summarized in the *Liber Possessionum*, a sure sign, they conclude, that properties granted out in *precaria* must have been lost to the monastery. They propose that the monks might have compiled another codex which included miscellaneous documents, such as the accompanying donation charters that sometimes are missing from the extant cartulary, royal diplomas that the monastery is known to have possessed, as well as charters of properties to the north and the east of the monastery. They reason that the holdings recorded in the projected cartulary probably would have been more important to the monks than those in the extant cartulary because it would have listed the estates that the monks directly exploited. The editors do not specify when this

¹⁴³ *Liber Possessionum Wizenburgensis*, ed. Christoph Dette, *Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Kirchengeschichte* 59 (Mainz, 1987); however, see critical remarks on Dette's edition by Anton Doll, 'Die Possessiones Wizenburgenses und ihre Neuedition', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 41 (1989), pp. 437–63; and Michael Gockel, 'Kritische Bemerkungen zu einer Neuauflage des Liber possessionum Wizenburgensis', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 39 (1989), pp. 353–80.

¹⁴⁴ On the dating of the entries, see Gockel, 'Kritische Bemerkungen', pp. 370–7; and Doll, 'Die Possessiones Wizenburgenses', p. 451. Dette's attempt to date the tenth-century holdings to the mid-ninth century, *Liber Possessionum*, pp. 40–2, have been sharply criticized; see Doll, 'Die Possessiones Wizenburgenses', pp. 446–8.

¹⁴⁵ On Weissenburg's leadership, see Glöckner, 'Anfänge', pp. 42–6. On Weissenburg's holdings to the north and east of the monastery, see Rösener, *Grundherrschaft im Wandel*, pp. 83–111; Dette, *Liber Possessionum*, pp. 26–71; and Alfons Schäfer, 'Das Schicksal des Weißenburgischen Besitzes im Uf- und Pfingzgau: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte hochadliger Herrschaftsbildung im Uf- und Pfingzgau im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 111 (1963), pp. 65–93, esp. pp. 65–73.

¹⁴⁶ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Witz.*, p. 44.

cartulary would have been compiled, but they suggest it would have predated the extant cartulary and assert – on the basis of the tenth-century properties summarized in the *Liber Possessionum* – that this more comprehensive codex would have been continuously supplemented at least up to 985, when the Salians took Weissenburg under their protection.

Glöckner and Doll have skilfully illuminated the tendencies and silences in the proprietary records of Weissenburg, but their explanation for the partial representation of the monastery's properties in the extant record rests on two debatable assumptions: that the cartulary represents the tip of a comprehensive programme to record property; and that the eagerness to document *precariae* attests to fears that lay patrons might filch property. We shall deal more fully with the motivations of monks and patrons shortly, but for the moment let it suffice to say that precarial properties arguably were more valuable to the monks because they bore witness to the monastery's impressive network of lay patrons without whose generosity the monks would have had almost nothing. With respect to the latter assumption, it is doubtful that the *Liber Possessionum* can be used to measure the attrition of property between the ninth and the tenth centuries in any straightforward way. We have no way of knowing whether the entries in this thirteenth-century polyptych represent a comprehensive accounting of all the properties owned by Weissenburg in Alsace and southern Lotharingia in the tenth century. They might summarize only the properties over which the monastery exercised direct control; or they might have been devised to complement those already represented in the cartulary. The last three charters in the cartulary were copied in by an eleventh-century hand, an indication that the codex was not forgotten but had continued to be consulted.¹⁴⁷ Even if the entries in the *Liber Possessionum* were intended to be a comprehensive survey of properties in the tenth century, the discrepancy between Weissenburg's holdings in the eighth and ninth centuries on the one hand, and those in the tenth on the other, might say nothing about the alleged instability of precarial property. The loss of property a century later cannot be used retroactively as evidence that the cartulary was assembled to defend property from the encroachment of patrons around 860, not only because such reasoning is circular, but also because the tenth-century properties listed in the *Liber Possessionum* appear to reflect the reorganization of the monastery's estates after Magyar raids.¹⁴⁸

The contingent nature of the entries in the *Liber Possessionum* suggests that the cartulary was not part of a more comprehensive project, as does

¹⁴⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 273–5. ¹⁴⁸ Rösener, *Grundherrschaft im Wandel*, pp. 95–8.

Patrick Geary's work, which has demonstrated just how opportunistic the record-keeping habits of early medieval monasteries were.¹⁴⁹ The absence of royal diplomas in the cartulary of Weissenburg is not evidence that another cartulary might have been produced, because royal charters are a feature of high medieval rather than early medieval cartularies.¹⁵⁰ Nor need we assume that the existence of a cartulary for some districts is evidence of an effort to assemble codices for all districts. The charters in the extant cartulary were copied from originals, or from copies of originals, which presumably had been organized in the monastic archive by district, as at St Gall. Since these loosely kept charters presumably were not thrown out, we might assume that they were returned to the larger fund of charters in the archive that served as the monastery's baseline of records which the monks could consult at need. Even if the monastery did compile another, more comprehensive codex, we would still be left to account for a cartulary devoted almost exclusively to precarial properties located to the south and west of the monastery and compiled around 860 independently of the larger, hypothetical cartulary. If the monks were motivated to assemble the extant cartulary because they were concerned about losing property to lay beneficiaries, why did they not include precarial properties from other districts? Surely the monastery, as the *Brevium Exempla* attest, had granted out *precariae* in the mid-Rhine districts to the north and east, but none are included in the cartulary. In the end, the cartulary deals partially with property in Alsace and in the southern Lotharingian districts of the Saargau and the Saulnois, all of which were disputed by Lothar II, Charles the Bald and Louis the German in the 850s and 860s.

The date and organization of the cartulary point in the direction of a more pragmatic enterprise undertaken in response to larger political forces, a supposition which finds support in the selective summary of properties to the north and the east of the monastery in the earliest, Carolingian-era entries of the *Liber Possessionum*. The contrasting geographical provenance of the properties in the *Liber Possessionum* and in the cartulary correspond to territories consigned to Louis at Verdun in 843, and those won by Louis at Meerssen in 870, respectively. As we have seen, the treaty of Verdun had allocated to Louis the German all of the territories east of the Rhine, as well as the cities and districts of Speyer, Worms and Mainz on the west bank; and to Lothar – where it pertains to our area of focus – Alsace, Lotharingia and northeast Burgundy. If we look at this agreement from the other end of the telescope, so to speak,

¹⁴⁹ Geary, *Phantoms*, pp. 81–114. ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200, n. 51.

from the perspective of the monks at Weissenburg, this division created a nerve-racking situation: the treaty had granted Louis control of the district where the monks physically resided, i.e. the Speyergau, as well as the mid-Rhine districts where the monks held property to its north and east; but it had awarded Lothar control of Alsace to the south of the monastery and the districts of southern Lotharingia to the west, where the monks also commanded extensive holdings.

The partition at Verdun probably provoked the monks of Weissenburg to document their rights to properties in the Wormsgau and the Speyergau. Wolfgang Metz hypothesized long ago that the selective documentation of properties in the *Liber Possessionum* generally conforms to the terms of Verdun and thus may have been derived from earlier record-keeping activities stimulated by the treaty.¹⁵¹ It may be, as Metz and others have speculated, that the ninth-century entries represent the partial survival of a once comprehensive manorial survey,¹⁵² but this springs again from the dubious assumption that monks were motivated by a self-evident impulse to compile comprehensive inventories. The districts summarized in the *Liber Possessionum*, presenting as they do a mirror image of those in the cartulary of Weissenburg, point to a more contingent undertaking. Although it is impossible to prove from the records themselves, mainly because they cannot be dated precisely within the ninth century,¹⁵³ the entries in the *Liber Possessionum* do have, as Metz suggested, the look of internal inventories drawn up to document the monastery's holdings in the mid-Rhine districts awarded to Louis in the decade following Verdun.

Similarly, the organizational plan of the cartulary echoes the terms at Meersen that consigned northern Lotharingia and portions of Burgundy to Charles the Bald, and southern Lotharingia, Alsace and parts of north-eastern Burgundy to Louis the German. According to the detailed record of the agreement in the *Annals of St Bertin*, Lothar II's kingdom was partitioned by episcopal province and monastery, and then by county and district.¹⁵⁴ In other words, Louis and Charles divvied up the powerful ecclesiastical institutions and the districts where monasteries and bishoprics held property.¹⁵⁵ If we limit the focus to the Vosges region, we

¹⁵¹ Wolfgang Metz, 'Das Kloster Weissenburg und der Vertrag von Verdun', in Clemens Bauer, Laetitia Boehm and Max Müller eds., *Speculum Historiale: Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung* (Freiburg, 1965), pp. 458–68.

¹⁵² Metz, 'Kloster Weissenburg', pp. 466–7; *Liber Possessionum*, pp. 43–7; Doll, 'Die Possessiones Wizenburgenses', p. 440; and Rösener, *Grundherrschaft im Wandel*, pp. 94–5.

¹⁵³ Doll, 'Die Possessiones Wizenburgenses', pp. 440–5; and Gockel, 'Kritische Bemerkungen', pp. 377–80.

¹⁵⁴ *AB*, a. 870, pp. 172–4. ¹⁵⁵ Cf. Nelson, *Annals of St Bertin*, p. 168, n. 4.

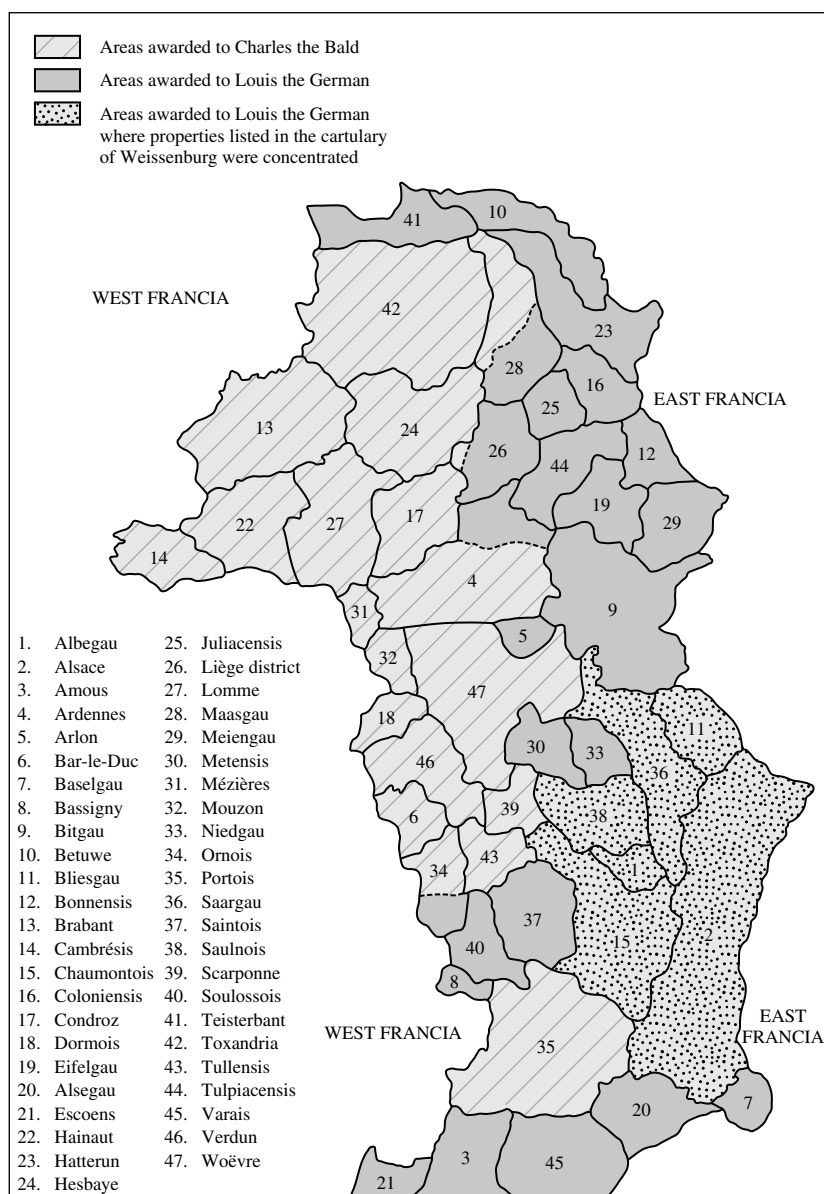
observe that Charles had received the sees of Besançon, Toul and Verdun; the monasteries of St Martin and St Mary in Besançon, Senone on the western flank of the Vosges, and Montfaucon and St Mihiel near Verdun; and the districts of Verdun, Toul, the Scarponne (between Metz and Toul), the upper Ornois and Bar-le-Duc on the Meuse (due east of Toul and south of Verdun), and the Portois (the upper Sône basin southwest of the Vosges).¹⁵⁶ Louis received the sees of Trier, Strasbourg and Basle; nine monasteries on the western and southwestern flanks of the Vosges (Luxeuil, Lure, Velefaux, Moyenmoutier, St Dié, Bonmoutier, Etival, Remiremont and Herbitzheim), nine on the eastern flank in Alsace (Murbach, Gregoriental, Maursmünster, Ebersheim, Honau, Masmünster, Hohenburg, St Stephen in Strasbourg, and Erstein); and seven in the Doubs valley and the Jura (Augustikirche in Basle, Baume les Dames, St Ursitz, Grandval, Haute-Pierre, Vacleuse, and Châteaux-Chalon). He also received the districts between the Vosges and the Moselle (the Bliesgau, Saargau, Niedgau, the city district of Metz, the Saulnois, Albegau, Chaumontois, and the Saintois); a cluster of districts further west on the upper Meuse (the Saintois, Soulossois, Bassigny and the southern portion of the Ornois); the districts between the southwestern Vosges and the Jura in the upper Sône and Doubs valleys (the Amous, Escoens, Varais and the Elzgau), and Alsace and the Baselgau on the upper Rhine east of the Vosges.¹⁵⁷

A comparison of the partition at Meerssen with the cartulary of Weissenburg reveals that Louis received six districts that correspond to an area surveyed by the cartulary: Alsace, the Saargau, the Saulnois, the Bliesgau, the Albegau and the Chaumontois (see map 6).¹⁵⁸ The terms 'Albegau' and the 'Chaumontois' are not used in the cartulary, but Weissenburg possessed property in both districts because the Rodoins had donated property in 718 at *Alba*, today Blâmont, the namesake of the Albegau.¹⁵⁹ The donation situated Blâmont in the Saargau perhaps because the term Albegau, which appears first in the account of the treaty of Meerssen, and then again in a diploma of Charles the Fat to Bonmoutier in 884, had not yet come into use when the donation was made.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, a late seventh-century notary situated donations to the east of Toul in the 'Moselgau', rather than the Chaumontois.¹⁶¹ This designation was applied in other sources to the county north of Metz, rather than to the area south of the city, where the properties were located. Glöckner and Doll reason that the monks must have used 'Moselgau' as a broad geographical designation to mark the literal location of properties near

¹⁵⁶ *AB*, a. 870, pp. 173–4. ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 172–3. ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 870, p. 173.

¹⁵⁹ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 194, 224. ¹⁶⁰ *D KIII*, no. 96. ¹⁶¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 205, 223, 252, 240.

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Map 6 The division of Lothar II's kingdom at Meerssen, 870

the Moselle.¹⁶² Whatever the reason, properties assigned to the 'Moselgau' were located in what otherwise was called the Chaumontois.

The location of Weissenburg's properties in these six districts and the cartulary's probable date of assembly around 860 strongly point to a connection between Weissenburg's claims to properties in Alsace and southern Lotharingia embodied in the codex, and the struggles between Lothar II, Charles and Louis for control of these same areas in the years leading up to Meersen. The location of the properties summarized in the cartulary also suggests that by the time Louis arrived at Meersen in 870, he did so from a position of strength, having already leveraged, through Weissenburg, control over Alsace and southern Lotharingia a decade earlier. It remains a distinct possibility that records such as cartularies would have been consulted in the negotiations leading up to the division. The accounts of the partitions between 840 and 870 specify that the important 'bishops', 'leading men' and 'councillors' of each king were commissioned to survey the empire.¹⁶³ The attending advisors at Meersen are unknown, but presumably Grimald was among those on Louis's side. Negotiations for the partition that culminated at Meersen in early August 870 began in March and intensified in May,¹⁶⁴ Grimald was archchaplain and archchancellor as late as April 870, and was succeeded by Liutbert, the archbishop of Mainz (863–89), sometime before 25 September.¹⁶⁵ If we assume that Grimald, who retreated to St Gall sometime in 870, did not retire until the crucial negotiating process was completed, which is likely when we consider that he had been Louis's archchaplain and archchancellor throughout the 860s, and that his expertise would have been greatly valued in so important a negotiation, Meersen would mark the logical end to Grimald's service. At Weissenburg he might have been succeeded by Liutbert as early as 862, the last documented evidence for Grimald's abbacy in the cartulary, although it is assumed that Grimald remained abbot at Weissenburg until 870.¹⁶⁶ The *Annals of Fulda* report that Liutbert was an energetic diplomat in the months leading up to Meersen and presumably also was at the meeting.¹⁶⁷ Whoever was abbot, we might assume that either would

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 439–41.

¹⁶³ *AB*, a. 842, p. 43; 870, p. 171; *AF*, a. 842, p. 33; 870, p. 71; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 4, c. 3, p. 126.

¹⁶⁴ *Regesta Imperii* 1, 1476 a–b; 1479 a–h.

¹⁶⁵ *D LG* nos. 131 and 132; cf. Kehr, 'Kanzlei Ludwigs', pp. 12–13.

¹⁶⁶ Fleckenstein, *Hofkapelle*, p. 176; Richard Schreml, 'Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Abtei Weißenburg im Elsaß', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Gerhard-Mercator-Universität (Duisburg, 1994), pp. 198–9.

¹⁶⁷ *AF*, a. 870, p. 70.

have arrived well-armed with records of Weissenburg's claims to the contested areas, i.e. with a cartulary which just happened to bear witness to the imposing bloc of (east Frankish) support the monastery commanded in the contested Alsatian and southern Lotharingian portions of Lothar's kingdom.

BACK TO THE FUTURE FOR THE PATRONS OF WEISSENBURG

The cartulary of Weissenburg did not simply represent a mechanical claim to territory from the highest levels of authority. It embodied the impressive network of families attached to Weissenburg, the coalition of proprietary interests that made up this broad monastic community and, by extension, the activation of this community within the context of Louis the German's territorial ambitions in the 850s and 860s. Let us now shift our focus and examine more closely the cluster of local monastic and aristocratic concerns expressed by the cartulary. If we could place ourselves in the shoes of aristocrats overseeing their estates in Alsace or southern Lotharingia during the second third of the ninth century, we would have ample reason to worry about the stability of the social contract that bound our interests to the eternal property rights of the monastery. We certainly would have been aware that rulers could, and sometimes did, invalidate charters drawn up under predecessors or rivals they considered illegitimate. It is odd, for example, that no charters or diplomas dated to the reign of Charles the Bald survive, even though the west Frankish king ruled in Alsace from 829 to 833, and pointedly passed through Weissenburg on his way from Strasburg to Worms in 842,¹⁶⁸ a march that presumably would have left in its wake various grants and privileges to secure the allegiances of monasteries and lay aristocrats during that period of fevered competition. The locals also would have been left unnerved by the rough justice and casual devastation wreaked by the vying armies. Although we possess no direct reports of such roughness in Alsace at that time, the passing of Charles's army had come on the heels of Louis the German's forcible suppression of the nearby towns along the left bank of the Rhine loyal to Lothar as the two brothers rushed to meet one another at Strasburg.¹⁶⁹ When we consider that Weissenburg was under the control of Lothar's man, Otgar, in 842, we might reasonably assume that Charles did his share of intimidating opponents along the way.

After the peace at Verdun the following year, the patron families of Weissenburg were free for a time from jolting events, but those living in

¹⁶⁸ Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 3, c. 5, p. 108. ¹⁶⁹ *AF*, a. 842, p. 33.

Alsace and southern Lotharingia were still left in an unenviable position: they were subject to Lothar, yet held property from a monastery which was under the protection of Louis the German and, after 847, under the leadership of Louis's archchancellor, Grimald. Overlapping loyalties were common, but these could become intolerable in intensely contested regions. Contemporary chronicles amply attest that as Lothar I, Louis or Charles vied for support, they routinely attempted to attract or intimidate magnates with promises of rewards or threats to revoke benefices.¹⁷⁰ In some cases, the loss of benefices was an unintentional, but no less traumatic, byproduct of abrupt shifts in the political landscape. Einhard, for example, was startled to discover in 833 that property granted to him by Lothar was suddenly located, on account of the division at Rotfeld, within the realm of Louis the German. In his letter to the east Frankish king, he pleaded that he might retain his benefice until he properly could be reinvested.¹⁷¹ The churches were fair game, too, and were exploited in the campaign to shore up support. Looking back on the period decades later from his perch in Mainz, the author of the *Vision of Charlemagne* complained that Charlemagne's grandsons had unscrupulously seized church property and granted it out to their supporters.¹⁷²

Charlemagne and Louis the Pious had anticipated such problems and made provisions to mitigate the strains. When each divided the empire among his heirs in 806 and 817, respectively, both stipulated that the vassals of one brother were to accept benefices 'only in the kingdom of his lord and not in another'.¹⁷³ Charlemagne added that churches and monasteries were to retain their properties wherever they might hold them, but apparently foresaw no potential problems because he spelled out no provisions for relieving the tensions that might arise when a monastery or church ended up with property in more than one kingdom.¹⁷⁴ Louis was more prescient and wisely perceived that his heirs might be tempted to 'divide and oppress churches' in the pursuit of power.¹⁷⁵ His solution for adjudicating abuses turned out to be unrealistic because it required the offender to submit to the judgement of his brothers, who then were

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IV*, bk 2, cc. 2–4, pp. 40–8; 7–9, pp. 58–68; bk 3, c. 3, pp. 94, 96; and bk 4, cc. 2, pp. 120, 122; 5–6, pp. 134–42; *AB*, a. 858, p. 80; 859, pp. 78–9; and *AF*, a. 858, pp. 49–51; 869, pp. 69–70.

¹⁷¹ Einhard, *Epistolae*, *MGH Epistolae 5: Epistolae Karolini aevi* 3, ed. Karl Hampe (Berlin, 1899), no. 25, p. 122.

¹⁷² *Visio Caroli Magni*, ed. Philippe Jaffé, *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum* 4: *Monumenta Carolina* (1867; reprint: Aalen, 1964), pp. 701–4, esp. pp. 703–4; cf. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, Neb., London, 1994), pp. 202–10.

¹⁷³ *Capitularia* vol. I, no. 45, c. 9, p. 128; and no. 136, c. 9, p. 272.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 45, c. 15, p. 129. ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 136, c. 10, p. 272.

supposed to correct him with 'fraternal love'. In the partisan atmosphere of the early 840s, this advice had little chance of being heeded.

The tangle of jurisdictions that afflicted Alsace and Lotharingia between Verdun and Meerssen posed dilemmas that the monks of Weissenburg and their patron families would have been anxious to resolve, and one which a shrewd ruler could exploit to his advantage. If the date and geographical organization of the cartulary of Weissenburg point to the larger struggles between Carolingian dynasts, the types of charter copied into it reveal that the cartulary was intended to express the common interests of the monastery and its patrons in an area plagued by political uncertainty. In short, the cartulary represents the convergence of royal, monastic and aristocratic interests in 860. Our first clue that the cartulary was not assembled in response to worries about loss of property to precarists is that it contains no records of property disputes. Weissenburg surely had disagreements with donor families, but if the defence of monastic rights vis à vis predatory neighbours had incited the monks to produce a cartulary, should not the codex have included records of judgements favourable to the monastery? In striking contrast, for example, to the cartulary of Freising, which contains numerous records of conflicts with donor groups in Bavaria,¹⁷⁶ the Weissenburg codex contains only one terse judgement and that, as we have seen in chapter 4, arose not from an attempt to recoup lost property, but from a disagreement over the imposition of a precarial *census*.

Our second clue is the preponderance of precarial and conditional-gift charters which by their very nature express the continuing rights that patron families exercised over ancestral properties donated to Weissenburg. This is most obvious in the southern Lotharingian section of the cartulary. Here one finds sixteen *precariae*¹⁷⁷ and ten conditional gifts¹⁷⁸ which account for a conspicuous 32 per cent of the section's contents. In nine instances, both the *precariae* and their accompanying donation charters were copied into the section, but in others, the original donation is missing.¹⁷⁹ That is, it was important to include not just records of donations, the monastery's claims to the property, but also precarial requests, the *continuing* claims of families to the property they donated.

¹⁷⁶ Brown, *Unjust Seizure*, pp. 19–20.

¹⁷⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 195, 196, 197, 198, 251, 199, 208, 226, 229, 255, 256, 257, 258, 264, 267, 269, 271. Two *precariae* were embedded into donation charters (nos. 198, 251, 199); the other fourteen *precariae* were exhibited in separate charters.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 192, 200, 202, 204, 254, 206, 214, 216, 221, 233, 242.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 208 [209], 226 [218, 239], 229 [228], 255 [236], 256 [192], 264 [193], 267 [223, 205, 218], 269 [268], 271 [270] (the donation charters are in brackets). The original donations for nos. 196, 242 and 258 are missing; cf. Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 43.

But even the donation charters probably were not entered exclusively to represent monastic claims. The heading to the register prefacing the Alsatian section, which records many more donation charters than *precaria*e, announces that 'these are the names of those who were renewed in the district of Alsace', an indication that the section was meant to survey properties held as *precaria*e in 860, whether those properties were recorded in the form of donations or *precaria*e.¹⁸⁰

The monastery's precarial bonds to particular kin-groups are inscribed in the internal organization of each section. The charters within the Alsatian section were organized roughly by chronology, geography, the size of donation and kinship.¹⁸¹ Although no one of these criteria provides an overarching principle of organization, one does detect a strong familial component. Charters 1–18, for example, belong to the Etichonids and groups associated with them in the late Merovingian period. Charters 19–34 deal with small donations between 798 and 806 in northern Alsace. The earliest and the latest charters in the Alsatian section, as well as several Etichonid charters, are represented in the cluster between no. 35 and no. 52. All but three charters between no. 53 and no. 135 date from the period between 765 and 797. Within this cluster are several sub-groups which are distinguished by location or family: eighteen charters between no. 71 and no. 110 deal with property in the village of Lembach, where at least three identifiable kin-groups held property; and all but one charter between no. 53 and no. 70 were executed by the Ratbald-Wicbald kin-group.¹⁸² The charters between no. 136 and no. 191 lack a clear pattern, although the series is distinguished by a preponderance of ninth-century charters, as well as the charters of the brothers Adalhelm and Milo, to whom we shall return shortly.

The patterns of kinship are more pronounced in the southern Lotharingian section of the cartulary. The editors complain that this section, dubbed by them 'the charters from the Saargau', is less elegantly organized than the Alsatian portion in that it lacks a register, more frequently includes multiple copies of transactions and, although it contains a concentration of charters from the Saargau, includes a significant number covering property in the Saulnois and a smattering of properties in the Albegau, the Chaumontois, the Bliesgau and the Speyergau. They reason that the ordering of materials in the Saargau section was 'badly achieved' because it preserves many of the monastery's oldest transactions

¹⁸⁰ *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 165.

¹⁸¹ Karl Glöckner, 'Aux bords des Vosges septentrionales à l'époque franque', *Revue d'Alsace* 93 (1954), pp. 21–35.

¹⁸² Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, pp. 41–2; see also Glöckner, 'Aux bords des Vosges', pp. 28–30.

which presumably were less familiar to the copyists.¹⁸³ This assessment, which reduces the problem of organization to one of mere technical proficiency, is not compelling for several reasons. First, the Alsatian section, for example, includes a number of charters from the late seventh century too, but their inclusion did not induce sloppiness or confusion. Second, it overlooks the fact that in one crucial aspect the Saargau section presents an even more coherent group of transactions: the charters of two interconnected families, the Rodoins and the Wolfoald-Gundoins, which stretch from the first charter of the section, no. 192, to the last, no. 273, provide an implicit thematic unity and dominate the bloc.¹⁸⁴ Of the eighty-two charters in the Saargau section, forty can with certainty be traced to members of these two families.¹⁸⁵ This number can be expanded to fifty-seven, or two-thirds of the charters, if we add the transactions of associated groups.¹⁸⁶ It would be more accurate to conclude that, although the section deals mostly with properties in the Saargau, it compiles the holdings of kin-groups in southern Lotharingia, most of whose property lay in the Saargau and the adjacent districts.

Taken as a whole, the cartulary can be read as if it were a text that tells the story of the relationships between Weissenburg and its families from a particular moment in the third quarter of the ninth century when both were under pressure in Alsace and Lotharingia. The charters within both sections are clustered around patron groups, the most prominent of which were represented by individuals who were living when the cartulary was assembled, who would have had a vested interest in safeguarding their long-standing precarial rights and who, it turns out, were close to the monks and thus in a position to exert influence on the cartulary project. Let us consider first the most heavily represented families in Alsace, the Etichonids and the Ratbald-Wicbalds, who as we have seen stepped out during Ermbert's abbacy from among the circle of families attached to the Etichonids, most notably in the persons of Sigibald, Richbald and Gerbald. Most of the charters belonging to these two groups were transacted long before the cartulary was compiled, in the early eighth century for the Etichonids, and in the last third of the eighth century for the Ratbald-Wicbalds. Names associated with the Ratbald-Wicbalds recur among witnesses in a smattering of ninth-century charters, an indication that descendants might have been holding these earlier

¹⁸³ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 42. ¹⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 192, 194–200, 204–5, 218, 223–9, 231–3, 239–43, 247, 251–2, 254, 256–7, 262, 267–73.

¹⁸⁶ On the basis of location of properties and witness lists, these are *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 201–3, 213, 222, 230, 234–8, 244, 248, 253, 261, 265–6. On the connections of these families to the Gundoins and Rodoins, see Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 34–42.

donations in *precaria* in the mid-ninth century when the cartulary was assembled. In 819, a certain Wicbald and Meginheri gave property in Frankenheim where Sigibald had made a donation between 774 and 776.¹⁸⁷ Sometime between 812 and 826, also in Frankenheim, a Gerbald witnessed a donation made by a Gisalrich and his wife Uadalrat.¹⁸⁸ Around 850, a Ratbald witnessed a donation that an Otmund had made for the souls of Uto and another Uadalrata in Münchhausen, just north of Frankenheim (see map 7).¹⁸⁹ And in 860 a Sigibold witnessed gifts of property made by a Meginhelm and an Engilmut in Zutzendorf, where Gerbald had given property in 784, and at Mohnenberg, very near to Krähenberg in the Sauer valley, where Sigibald had given property in 773 and 774.¹⁹⁰ One particular charter from southern Lotharingia does demonstrate by analogy that properties donated much earlier were being held by descendants in the mid-ninth century. In 764, a certain Albrich donated property in the Saulnois and received it back in *precaria* from Weissenburg the next year.¹⁹¹ Although the cartulary does not document who held the property subsequent to Albrich, the copyist in 860 introduced it as the 'charter which Albrich of Bourgaltrouff and Bassing, grandfather of Count Sigihart, made'.¹⁹² The cartulary includes no transactions undertaken by a Sigihart, although a same-named count is known to have operated to the north around Trier in 844, and presumably it was he who was holding the property when the cartulary was assembled.¹⁹³

Be that as it may, there need not have been an active Ratbald-Wicbald consciousness for their properties to have been deemed important enough to be included in the cartulary. The Ratbald-Wicbald donations made in the late eighth century appear to have been absorbed into the precarial grants of others hovering about the monastery in the ninth century. This cannot be demonstrated with each donation, but we can make out that Hugo of Tours incorporated Ratbald-Wicbald properties into his Alsatian lordship. As we have seen, as part of an effort to publicize his ancestral power in Alsace, Hugo exchanged property with Weissenburg at an imperial assembly in 820. The details of the swap reveal that Hugo had transferred five properties in northern and central Alsace for 'whatever the rectors of the monastery are seen to possess' in Dettwiller.¹⁹⁴ These holdings must have included the Dettwiller properties given to Weissenburg by Gerbald and Richbald in 784 and 797,¹⁹⁵ as well as the donation made there in 788 for Gerbald's soul.¹⁹⁶ Whether

¹⁸⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 127, 53, 178, 57, 58.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 176.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 165.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 49, 60, 53, 178, 128.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 193 (764), 264 (765).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, no. 193.

¹⁹³ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 399.

¹⁹⁴ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 69.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 60, 62.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 102.



Map 7 The estate centres in northern and central Alsace

Hugo absorbed other properties is unclear, but the exchange was copied into a bloc of seventeen charters made by Sigibald, Gerbald and Richbald, hinting at an association between later Etichonid lordship and the Ratbald–Wicbald legacy.¹⁹⁷ Hugo was long dead by the time the cartulary was assembled, but since we know that *precaria*e were passed on to heirs, and from the register to the Alsatian section that the cartulary was devised to record properties which were renewed, we might surmise that his son Liutfrid, who was flourishing as a powerful councillor to Lothar II, would have had an interest in the fate of the family's holdings at Weissenburg. So too would Lothar II and his bastard son Hugo, both of whom possessed Etichonid blood and were involved in plans to place part, and then all, of Alsace under Louis the German's protection in 860 and 867.

Ratbald–Wicbald properties also would have been important to two other figures closely attached to the monastery around 860, the brothers Adalhelm and Milo, both of whom were precarists of significance at Weissenburg. In 840, Adalhelm and Milo had donated properties at Nieffern, Bosselshausen and Waldolwisheim in northern Alsace and received them back in usufruct along with the monastery's possessions in Kirrwiller, including a lucrative local church, for three *solidi* a year.¹⁹⁸ Adalhelm expanded the donation in 855 to include several more properties between the Moder and the Zorn, again receiving it all back, as well as the church in Kirrwiller, in usufruct.¹⁹⁹ Adalhelm attracted the special notice of the scribes who compiled the cartulary: at the beginning of the section in which Adalhelm's charters appear, a marginal note informs the reader that 'in this [quaternion] is the charter of abbot Adalhelm'.²⁰⁰ This note must have referred to Adalhelm's transaction of 855, which a copyist set off with an emphatic rubric: 'the gift of abbot Adalhelm [is] next in order.'²⁰¹ What Adalhelm was abbot of is unclear. He might have been a lay abbot, as was common in Lothar I's kingdom, or perhaps he was identical to another Adalhelm, the abbot of Gengenbach, just southeast of Strasburg near the Black Forest.²⁰² However, he might simply have been sub-abbot under Grimald, since earlier abbots of Weissenburg are known to have administered the monastery through similar on-the-spot representatives. Ermbert's sub-abbot, for example, was a certain Gerbert, and Bernhar's was a certain Gerhoh.²⁰³ Apparently because they also were bishops of Worms, Ermbert and Bernhar designated sub-abbots to govern Weissenburg in their absence. Grimald, as abbot of several monasteries

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 53–70; Hugo's charter is no. 69. ¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 151. ¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 156.

²⁰⁰ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 344, n. 140, and p. 353.

²⁰¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 156: *Traditio Adalhelmi abbatis posteriora*.

²⁰² Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 353. ²⁰³ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 217, 168, 171, 173.

and as the archchaplain and archchancellor in east Francia, presumably would have designated someone to administer Weissenburg during his frequent absences. Whether Adalhelm filled that role cannot be demonstrated decisively, but his transaction of 855 hints at an official relationship between himself and Grimald: of the twelve extant charters from Grimald's two tenures at Weissenburg, only in Adalhelm's charter did Grimald receive a gift in his capacity as the *abba summusque capellanus*, 'abbot and archchaplain'.²⁰⁴ Two years later, a 'deacon' Adalhelm received property from Louis the German in southeastern Alemannia.²⁰⁵ This deacon appeared a few months later as Grimald's 'chaplain' when he donated the property he had received from the king to St Gall and then received it in *precaria* from Grimald.²⁰⁶ Whether this deacon and chaplain was the same 'abbot' Adalhelm known to the monks at Weissenburg is impossible to prove, but the chronology is suggestive, as is the well-documented intercourse between monastic communities in Alsace and Alemannia.²⁰⁷

Adalhelm and Milo's notoriety at Weissenburg, as well as their probable ancestors' connections to the Ratbald-Wicbalds, probably suggested them as recipients of any *precariae* carved out of earlier Ratbald-Wicbald donations. Abbot Adalhelm probably descended from two earlier Adalhelms, all three of whom operated in Alsatian villages along the Moder river, and to the north in the villages of Lembach and Preuschdorf.²⁰⁸ The first Adalhelm must have passed away by 772 or 775, because a donation of property in Preuschdorf was made then for his soul.²⁰⁹ The second witnessed donations of property just north of Preuschdorf in Lembach in 777, and in 798 at Dauendorf, south on the Moder.²¹⁰ It may even be that Adalhelm and Milo were descended from some of the earliest recorded donors in Alsace, Adalgis and Frawinsind, and their son Milo, who in 695 made a donation of property in Görsdorf, immediately west of Preuschdorf. These locations point to connections with Sigibald, Gerbald and Richbald, who had given property in Dauendorf and Preuschdorf during the late eighth century,²¹¹ with Richbald, who had purchased property for Weissenburg in Lembach,²¹² and with Sigibald, one of whose neighbours was a man named Milo.²¹³ In 830, Abbot Adalhelm's brother Milo donated

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 156. ²⁰⁵ *D LG*, no. 83. ²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 87.

²⁰⁷ Dieter Geuenich, 'Elsaßbeziehungen in den St. Galler Verbrüderungsbüchern', in Peter Ochsenein and Ernst Ziegler eds., *Codices Sangallenses: Festschrift für Johannes Duft zum 80. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1995), pp. 105–16.

²⁰⁸ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 24, 49, 71/3, 151, 156, 177; and *ibid.*, nos. 26, 105, 49, 93, respectively.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 26, 105. ²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 93, 24.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 66 [765/6], 128 [773], 54 [774], 63 [774] and 60 [784].

²¹² *Ibid.*, no. 155. ²¹³ *Ibid.*, no. 190.

some properties on either side of the Rhine and received them back in usufruct along with the monastery's possessions in Modern, including the village church²¹⁴ which, it turns out, had been donated decades earlier by none other than Sigibald and Richbald.²¹⁵ Similar to Hugo of Tours, who had absorbed Ratbald-Wicbald properties in Dettwiller, the Ratbald-Wicbald properties in Modern had been subsumed by Adalhelm and Milo. In other words, the monks were careful to copy so many Ratbald-Wicbald transactions into the cartulary because these properties were important to influential benefactors operating in the mid-ninth century.

This phenomenon is most pronounced in the southern Lotharingian section of the cartulary. The Rodoins, as stated earlier, had cultivated a relationship with Weissenburg in the late seventh and the early eighth centuries. They had entrusted much of their property to the monastery and had maintained access to it from generation to generation in the form of precarial grants. Moreover, just as Ratbald-Wicbald properties had been co-opted by Hugo of Tours and Adalhelm and Milo, we saw in chapter 2 that ninth-century Rodoins had been granted control of the property of the extinct Wolfoald-Gundoins.²¹⁶ Most of the property was concentrated in the Saargau, although the Rodoins and Wolfoald-Gundoins also held property in the Saulnois, the Chaumontois, the Bliesgau and the Speyergau.²¹⁷ Relations between the Rodoins and the monastery were not always harmonious, but as we observed in chapter 4, the dispute that arose between them eventually was resolved and members of the kin-group were conducting transactions with Weissenburg up to the moment the cartulary was assembled.

The southern Lotharingian section of the cartulary was organized around Wolfoald-Gundoin and Rodoin holdings, and incorporates a striking proportion of precarial charters, because the later Rodoins were concerned about the fate of the properties that their ancestors had held from Weissenburg, as well as those that had belonged to families associated with them in the past. If we position ourselves in the mid-ninth century, when the cartulary was assembled, we notice that the patterns converge on the later Rodoins: of the thirty-seven charters antedating 741 in the southern Lotharingian section, all but two can be traced in some way to the earlier Rodoins and Wolfoald-Gundoins;²¹⁸ and of the twelve postdating 830, eleven represent transactions involving the

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 172. ²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 53, 178 (Sigibald, 774), 62 (Richbald, 797).

²¹⁶ See above, chapter 2, pp. 72–5. ²¹⁷ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 199, 205, 223, 252, 240, 272.

²¹⁸ As witnesses, notaries or authors of transactions, members of these two families appear in *ibid.*, nos. 192, 194–6, 202, 203, 205, 213, 218, 224–9, 231–5, 237, 239–44, 247, 252, 256, 257, 261, 262, 265, 267. Nos. 248 and 266 reveal no obvious connections. After 741, the next charters in the Saargau section date to 755, cf. *ibid.* nos. 221, 222.

Rodoins.²¹⁹ This strongly suggests that the interests of the later Rodoins exerted a powerful influence on the records included in the cartulary.

The Rodoins most probably to have had access to the inner councils of Weissenburg were Lantfrit and Gebolt, both of whom made donations and requested *precaria* in the decades leading up to 860. Lantfrit served as auxiliary bishop in the diocese of Metz under Archbishop Drogo (826–55), the brother and archchaplain of Louis the Pious. We know little about Lantfrit's activities beyond his transactions with Weissenburg, other than that sometime between 826 and 836 he supervised for Drogo the translation of the relics of St Adolphus from Metz to the monastery of Neuweiler in northwestern Alsace.²²⁰ As a donor, as a member of a traditional patron family and as an ecclesiastic of some stature, he presumably commanded respect at Weissenburg. Even more likely to have been in a position to have advised the cartulary project was Gebolt, who had developed an especially close relationship with the monastery: of all the properties granted out after 786, his conditional gift of 851 remains the only one that was not burdened with a *census*.²²¹ Gebolt also was an advocate for Weissenburg at mid-century. As such, he would have had at his disposal significant amounts of monastic property and, since advocates typically prosecuted or defended a monastery's property rights with documentary evidence, an intimate familiarity with the records of Weissenburg's holdings.²²²

Gebolt, Lantfrit, Adalhelm and Milo were anxious to reaffirm their ties with the monastery in the turbulent second third of the ninth century; and Weissenburg's abbots were eager to court their favour. In 830, the year of Lothar's first rebellion, Abbot Folcwig and Weissenburg's traditional patrons aligned themselves with Louis the Pious. The priests Lantfrit and Milo made donations to Weissenburg in, respectively, February and November of that year.²²³ Lantfrit's donation may reveal an initial sympathy with factions loyal to the emperor, a plausible interpretation when we consider his role as auxiliary bishop under Drogo, the emperor's brother, and that his donation was made a mere month after Louis the Pious regained control of the empire from Lothar in 830.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 198, 200, 204, 251, 154, 268–73. The twelfth, no. 215, was transacted by a certain Heppo in 840/1 in the Saulnois.

²²⁰ *Translatio et Miracula S. Adelphi Episcopi Mettensis*, ed. L. de Heinemann, *MGH SS* 15, 1 (Hanover, 1887), p. 294.

²²¹ *Trad. Wiz.*, no. 254.

²²² See for example, the much better-documented behaviour of advocates in Bavarian charters: Wilhelm Störmer, *Früher Adel: Studien zur politischen Führungsschicht im fränkisch-deutschen Reich vom 8. bis 11. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols., *Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 6 (Stuttgart, 1973), vol. II, pp. 426–32; and Brown, *Unjust Seizure*, pp. 75–87.

²²³ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 198, 251, 172.

The cartulary preserves few transactions from the 830s, a silence which may speak loudly about those troubled times, either because the disturbances arrested giving or, more likely, because some transactions were rendered obsolete or invalidated by the shifting political terrain. One of the few extant charters from this period belonged to the Rodoins, who appear to have aligned themselves with Grimald. 'Under the testimony of abbot Grimald', Gebolt made another donation of property in the Rodoin stronghold of Waldhambach.²²⁴ When the monastery reverted to Lothar's control in 839, Adalhelm and Milo quickly appeared in January 840 to give property to Abbot Otgar.²²⁵ We do not know the roles they or the Rodoins played in the three years of civil war that ensued upon Louis the Pious's death in 840, but after the dust settled they reasserted themselves. In 846, Gebolt, his brother Adalhard and Lantfrit all made donations to Otgar.²²⁶ Otgar died in April 847, Grimald took over the abbey, and by June the Rodoins were cultivating Grimald again with another donation from Lantfrit.²²⁷ Lantfrit was followed in 851 by Gebolt,²²⁸ and then by Adalhelm in 855, who basically resubmitted the donation he and Milo had made to Otgar in 840, presumably to receive Grimald's affirmation.²²⁹

For their parts, Otgar and Grimald were just as eager to bind these local notables to the monastery. Of the six charters that date to Otgar's abbacy, five deal with Adalhelm and the Rodoins. The first surviving charter from Otgar's abbacy records the conditional gift of Adalhelm and Milo in 840,²³⁰ an act that might have revived an old connection: let us recall that it was probably Adalhelm's ancestor of the same name who had mediated the dispute between the Rodoins and Weissenburg at the request of a palace functionary named Otacar. The transaction appears to have been initiated by the abbot, who according to the charter 'asked this *precaria* to be made'. Otgar was also careful to have Rodoins commit their support. On the same day in 846, the Rodoins Gebolt and Adalhard, and Lantfrit and his nephew Geboart, appeared together at Weissenburg to make donations and receive them back in *precaria*.²³¹ Whereas Otgar's transactions were carried out at Weissenburg, Grimald evinced a different approach as he or his emissaries frequently went out to meet influential donors. Gebolt's donation of 838 was received at Saargau in the Saargau;²³² in 847, Lantfrit made a donation just south of Saargau at Hermelange;²³³ and in 855, Adalhelm reaffirmed and expanded his donation of 840 at Kirrwiller in Alsace.²³⁴ Although it is difficult to get a sense

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 273. ²²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 151. ²²⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 268–71. ²²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 200.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 204, 254. ²²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 156. ²³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 151. ²³¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 268/9, 270/1.

²³² *Ibid.*, no. 273. ²³³ *Ibid.*, nos. 200, 204, 254. ²³⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 156.

of the personalities of people in charters, Grimald does come off as an engaging figure, an impression that accords with the fond recollections of his patronage of east Frankish scholars and poets.²³⁵

The unprecedented generosity of these transactions underscores the abbots' efforts to cajole landowners to continued support of the monastery and attests to the astuteness of Adalhelm, Gebolt and Lantfrit, who took advantage of circumstances to negotiate favourable transactions. Adalhelm and his brother Milo received from Otgar not just use of their donation in 840, but control of all the monastery's possessions in Kirrwiller, including the local church. Grimald did raise the *census* when Adalhelm received the benefice again in 855, presumably because Adalhelm had expanded the gift and thus the size of the *precaria*. Similarly, Lantfrit received his donation in *precaria* from Grimald, as well as the use of the local church in Biberkirch and a monastic cell. The value of Lantfrit's property is reflected in the size of the rent, twenty *solidi*, by far the highest of any *precaria* in the cartulary. And to Gebolt belonged the unique privilege of having received from Grimald the only unburdened *precaria* granted out by Weissenburg after 786.

THE CIRCLE OF WEISSENBURG

The patterns in the charters, therefore, suggest at least four patrons who are likely to have had a close interest in the cartulary project: the *corepiscopus* Lantfrit, the advocate Gebolt, Abbot Adalhelm and his brother Milo. The charters also indicate that these four formed a tightly knit circle at Weissenburg. Adalhelm and Gebolt both held property in the Alsatian village of Kirrwiller,²³⁶ witnessed one another's transactions and served together as witnesses for several other donors. Adalhelm witnessed Gebolt's donation in 838,²³⁷ and his donation and *precaria* of 846;²³⁸ and Gebolt bore witness to Adalhelm and Milo's conditional gift of 840.²³⁹ Both Gebolt and Adalhelm witnessed a donation made by Lantfrit;²⁴⁰ and with Milo both witnessed another donation.²⁴¹ In 862, Adalhelm also bore witness to the transaction of another Rodoin, Gervolk.²⁴² Of the twenty-one charters in the cartulary postdating 830, Gebolt, Lantfrit and Adalhelm undertook ten.²⁴³ If we add the transactions undertaken

²³⁵ See above, chapter 5, p. 152. ²³⁶ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 151, 156, 204, 254. ²³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 273.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 268, 269. ²³⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 151, 268, 269, 273. ²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 200.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 51. Who actually made the donation is unclear because the witness list was spliced into a charter which was forged and entered into the cartulary in the twelfth century.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, nos. 51, 200, 272.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, nos. 151, 156, 172, 198, 251, 200, 204, 254, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273.

by their relatives, such as Gervolk and Adalhelm's brother Milo,²⁴⁴ the number swells to twelve, or more than half. In addition, Gebolt and Adalhelm appeared separately as witnesses in two other transactions;²⁴⁵ and Adalhelm and Milo appear as witnesses to a transaction in the fall of 860, the *terminus post quem* for the cartulary.²⁴⁶ Together, Adalhelm, Gebolt, Lantfrit and their relatives were involved in sixteen of the latest twenty-one transactions in the cartulary. And all three, by virtue of their close – in two cases official – affiliations with Weissenburg, were in a position to have influenced any cartulary produced by monks, especially one that was so obviously oriented toward their own precarial interests.

This is only a short list of figures who, on the basis of the most explicit evidence, are most likely to have been involved in some capacity. The charters hint at two others: Raduin, whose name, the linguistic equivalent of Rodoin, situates him among the Rodoins, and who appears as advocate in the last dated charter of 862;²⁴⁷ and Meginhelm, who made the latest donation in the Alsatian section in the autumn of 860, appears as an advocate in an undated charter estimated to have been transacted between 860 and 864, and who, as we have seen, may have been descended from the Ratbald-Wicbalds.²⁴⁸ The witness list to Meginhelm's charter includes not only Adalhelm and Milo, but also Eto, who made a donation in 838 with Gebolt.²⁴⁹

To this circle we can admit an important figure in the scriptorium itself, the poet Otfrid. Otfrid served as notary for only two charters in the cartulary, one of which was Gebolt's exceptional conditional gift of 851 in Kirrwiller.²⁵⁰ The other was a donation made around 850 by his putative kinsman, a certain Otmund, who gave property in Münchhausen just southeast of Weissenburg along the Rhine for his own sake and for the souls of Uto and Udaltrata, presumably Otmund's parents.²⁵¹ The family appears to have been part of a north Alsatian cluster of groups once associated with the Ratbald-Wicbalds. The threads of a possible link to the Ratbald-Wicbalds run through a certain Otrih, who witnessed the conditional gift Otfrid wrote up for Gebolt. Otrih witnessed this transaction with a Muatheri, a name that appears frequently in Ratbald-Wicbald charters of the late eighth century;²⁵² and around 850 served as witness to another donation with a certain Gozbert, who in turn appeared with Adalhelm and Milo in a donation of 860.²⁵³ Otrih appears

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 172, 272. ²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 158, 166. ²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 49. ²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 272.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 50, 49, respectively. ²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 273. ²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 204, 254.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 165. On Otfrid's relationship to Otmund, see Glöckner and Doll's comments, *ibid.*, p. 365.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, nos. 53, 178, 55–8, 60–3, 65, 66, 70, 113. ²⁵³ *Ibid.*, nos. 167, 49, respectively.

in a third charter as witness with both Gozbert and Muatheri around 850 in a conditional gift of property in Cazfeld.²⁵⁴ About a half century before, in 798, we find an Otbert donating property in Cazfeld.²⁵⁵ This Otbert, it turns out, was the son of a person named Gozbert. The year before, this Gozbert had donated for his son some property in a village just north of Cazfeld; and a decade before made a donation of property in central Alsace for a second son named Otheri.²⁵⁶ Gozbert's wife was named Beratlinda, presumably a woman who stemmed from the *Berat*-family, a group responsible for eight, late eighth-century donations in Lembach, and one of whose number witnessed Otbert's donation of 798.²⁵⁷ Thus, Otfrid's family appears to have been part of a nexus of interconnected groups in northern Alsace, and for that reason he also would have had a keen interest in the fate of Ratbald-Wicbald properties represented in the cartulary.

More importantly, Otfrid was in a position literally to have helped assemble the cartulary, or perhaps even to have overseen the project, both because he was a prominent notary in the scriptorium and because his background suggests a familiarity with cartulary productions. Otfrid had studied in the 830s at Fulda, where he presumably not only had been exposed to vernacular compositions, but also may have been exposed to the cartulary project that was being undertaken there at that same time. Had the organization of the Weissenburg cartulary been inspired by Fulda, whose cartulary also was organized by *Gau*, and then implemented by Otfrid? Glöckner and Doll concede a possible role for Otfrid but point to the *Brevium Exempla* as evidence that Weissenburg had been organizing its charters by *Gau* well before the appearance of the Fulda codex.²⁵⁸ This might suggest that the direction of influence may have run from Weissenburg to Fulda, rather than the other way around. Unfortunately, paleographical analysis cannot settle the issue of Otfrid's participation. It once was believed that his hand could be located among the team of scribes who copied the charters, but none matches that of the person who corrected one of the manuscripts of the *Evangelienbuch* and who is believed to have been Otfrid himself.²⁵⁹ On the other hand, as there is no definitive proof that the corrector of the *Evangelienbuch* actually was Otfrid, Otfrid cannot be ruled out as one of the copyists.²⁶⁰

Did any of the other prominent figures – Adalhelm, Milo, Gebolt or Lantfrid – actually contribute to the cartulary? This is impossible to prove, and there is little reason to suspect that they would have participated

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 115. ²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 22. ²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 85, 84, respectively.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 93–8, 106, 122; and *ibid.*, no. 22. ²⁵⁸ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, p. 41.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17, and p. 24, n. 28. ²⁶⁰ Cf. Bostock, *Handbook*, p. 191.

literally in its production, with the possible exception of Abbot Adalhelm. That said, we might well wonder whether they had supplied the monks with charters. The cartulary of Freising provides insightful evidence that ecclesiastical archives were within the reach of patron groups. In his introduction to the Freising codex, Cozroh complained that some charters had been lost, others robbed or destroyed (*deripio*) by 'the deceits of the envious', and still others had been removed by 'strangers' and 'false brothers'.²⁶¹ Cozroh was alarmed by what he characterized as subversive efforts to alienate property, but if we simply focus on the action that provoked his criticism and suspend for a moment the indignation, we can perceive that Cozroh's account testifies to the casual give-and-take of documentary materials within and beyond the church of Freising. Indeed, since we know that most of the members of any ecclesiastical chapter came from the surrounding kindreds, we might well conclude that these inside jobs had been pulled off by monks related to the patrons.

The cartulary of Weissenburg, which unlike that of Freising bears no evidence of having been undertaken as a defence against subversive neighbours, attests to a reverse process, to a cooperative effort to document precarious rights. Naturally, many of the documents must have come from the monastery's own collection, but the precarious nature of the documents, as well as the redundant entry of fifteen transactions, suggest origins within the families themselves.²⁶² These second, and in one case third, copies were not mere duplicates of the same charter. Although the copyists who compiled the cartulary in 860 sometimes updated the language or orthography, the variations between them indicate that these copies had been derived from the charters that had been handed out to both the monastery and the patron at the time of transaction. For example, of the three versions of the extensive donation made by Ermbert and Count Otto in 699, one appears to have been the monastery's. As for the other two, each introduced in the cartulary as the *exemplaria Ottoni atque Eremberti*, they once had belonged to the two brothers.²⁶³ In two instances, the copies for the monastery and the patron were drawn up by separate notaries, an indication that sometimes each party had its own scribe write up the charter, and that the monks had been careful to enter the patron's version into the cartulary too.²⁶⁴ In yet another case, only the patron's copy was entered into the cartulary. The charter of a certain

²⁶¹ *Trad. Freising*, pp. 1–2.

²⁶² *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 8/47, 17/159, 26/105, 35/162, 53/178, 110/154, 204/254, 205/223/252, 218/239, 245/250. The editors offer no opinion for five other examples, nos. 71/73, 194/224, 198/251, 216/249, 259/260.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, nos. 205/223/252. ²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 218/239, 194/224.

Gisalrich and his wife Uadalrat, which combines the acts of donation and *precaria*, ordered that 'two charters be made', although only their copy was reproduced.²⁶⁵ In addition the copyists, especially in the southern Lotharingian section, frequently included the donation as well as the separate precarial charter that once belonged to the patron. Thus, the donation and *precaria* made in 846 by the *corepiscopus* Lantfrit were drawn up by the notary John, who states that he wrote up the former for Weissenburg's notary, Baltram, but the latter for Lantfrit.²⁶⁶

Glöckner and Doll assume that Gisalrich and Uadalrat's charter, as well as many of the duplicates, were returned to the monastery when the leases expired.²⁶⁷ We know, however, that these *precariae* did not just expire; they were – as the Rodoins' own experience demonstrates – handed out again and again to heirs who presumably kept copies as proof of their precarial rights. It surely is no coincidence that these multiple copies are traceable to groups whose members were closely associated with Weissenburg in 860: six are of Etichonid, Ratbald-Wicbald or Adalhelmi properties which, as we have seen, formed an interrelated network of estates in Alsace;²⁶⁸ five are of Wolfoald-Gundoin and Rodoin provenance;²⁶⁹ and two are traceable to ancestors of Count Sigihard.²⁷⁰ The one remaining belongs to a late eighth-century transaction in the Saulnois, a sale made by a certain Willirich and Helmdrudis in 771 to a monastic representative in the Saulnois, Hartbert, and may point to the persistence of a group there.²⁷¹ The cartulary does preserve a cluster of charters from the Saulnois which stretch from Duke Theotchar in 682 to a certain Heppo in 840/1, but the connection of these two figures, assuming there was one, to the intervening Helmdrudis-Helidmunt-Hildrat-Hiltbert group, which was responsible for a nexus of donations in the Saulnois between 770 and 800, remains elusive.²⁷²

The coalitional nature of the project is manifest in Gebolt's unique, unburdened conditional gift of 851. First entered as no. 204, shortly after the presentation of a series of Rodoin charters (nos. 195–200), it appeared

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 176. ²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 270, 271.

²⁶⁷ Glöckner and Doll, *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 8/47, p. 180; nos. 17/159, p. 195; nos. 26/105, p. 206; nos. 35/162, p. 213; nos. 53/178, p. 243; nos. 110/154, p. 314; nos. 204/254, pp. 417–18; nos. 205/223/252, p. 439; nos. 218/239, p. 470; and nos. 245/250, p. 483. They offer no opinion on the other five examples, nos. 71/73, 194/224, 198/251, 216/249 and 259/260.

²⁶⁸ *Trad. Wiz.*, nos. 8/47, 17/159, 26/105, 35/162, 53/178, 110/154.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 204/254, 205/223/252, 218/239, 194/224, 198/251.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 249/216, 259/260. ²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 245/250.

²⁷² On Theotchar and Heppo, see *ibid.*, nos. 213, 215; and on the Helidmunt-Hildrat-Hiltbert group, *ibid.*, nos. 206–10, 214. The names of seven witnesses to Heppo's charter appear in the witness lists to Helidmunt's and Hiltbert's gifts of 786 and of 785, but the fifty-five year gap separating these transactions from Heppo's raises some obvious problems in assuming a firm link.

again as no. 254 in a quaternion replete with duplicates (nos. 249–52). Glöckner and Doll assume this second copy came back to the monastery shortly after 851, although more probably it was gathered at the time of the cartulary's production because it had not yet lapsed and so could not have come into the monastery's possession at the expiration of the lease. One of the scribes corrected Gebolt's version and then, in response to the absence of burdens, interjected along the lower margin (in the present tense) that whoever 'then holds this aforesaid property, let him pay two *solidi* every year'.²⁷³ The patterns suggest, then, that the monks had rounded up documentation from their own archive and from powerful patrons as part of a collective effort to safeguard the property rights of the monastic community in Alsace and southern Lotharingia during an especially tense moment for the monastery and its patrons, a moment that a shrewd diplomat such as Grimald could exploit to the advantage of his lord, Louis the German.

CONCLUSIONS

By the ninth century ecclesiastical institutions, by virtue of their vast proprietary wealth and their extensive network of patron families, dominated the social and political landscape of early medieval Europe. As these property-holding institutions became the foci of ever larger social networks, they also came to represent ever more formidable pockets of support or resistance during moments of political upheaval. Consequently, during the succession contests of the ninth century, Carolingian aspirants sought to consolidate their authority in no small part by enlisting the support of ecclesiastical institutions. Nonetheless, monasteries were not mere instruments of royal power. They had to balance their royal obligations with concerns to protect their property rights within which were embedded the precarial rights of their patrons. In the end, most were not sentimental about imperial unity. When presented with choices in the face of threats, they supported the dynast who could defend their rights and bolster their local hegemony with additional grants and privileges. Ironically, the impression of chaos and upheaval given off by many contemporaries, whose accounts often were partisan and who, because of their own connections to the royal courts and the upper aristocracy, were most likely to lose properties and offices, or to know people who did, contrasts with the remarkable stability and adaptability of the more localized order. Kings might champion the

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, no. 254.

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interests of dishonoured nobles as an excuse to intervene in neighbouring kingdoms, but the sheer weight of the lower and middle aristocracy, and its collective attachment to monastic institutions, proved decisive. As we shall see, even as the Carolingian kingdoms broke apart into ever smaller kingdoms in the late ninth century, the basic networks of families and monasteries so assiduously cultivated during the Carolingian period remained intact.

THE LATE CAROLINGIAN ORDER

During the late Carolingian period the relative power of kings, monasteries and families was subtly reconfigured. As the dust settled from the succession conflicts of the second third of the ninth century, many monasteries came under the direct domination of patron families. This situation contrasts markedly with the high Carolingian period, when monasteries attempted to establish a clearer hierarchy of ecclesiastical rights over family rights; and with the late Merovingian period, when the relationships between monasteries and families were essentially symmetrical. Aristocratic dominance was not brought about, as once alleged, by the putative impotence of late Carolingian kings, because royal authority always remained relevant to the aristocracy and because in the east Frankish kingdom, with the possible exception of the first two decades of the tenth century, royal power remained a potent force.¹ In Alsace in particular, royal influence continued to circulate freely.

Upon the death of Louis the German (876), east Francia was partitioned into three kingdoms: Bavaria went to Carloman, the northern sector plus Lotharingia went to Louis the Younger, and the southwestern portion, namely Alsace and Alemannia, was apportioned to Charles the Fat. Charles was well-connected to the local aristocracy, having been married to Richgarda, daughter of Count Erchangar, whose family had been prominent in both Alsace and Alemannia at least since the latter years of Charlemagne's reign.² In time-honoured tradition, Charles and his queen cultivated their position in Alsace with the organization of a new monastery at Andlau.³ Over the decade of his rule, after the manner of his ancestors, Charles confirmed or issued grants to a number of monasteries in and around Alsace, among them Murbach, Weissenburg, Honau, Grandval,

¹ Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 115–37; MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 48–122.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–91, 186–90. ³ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 139–42.

Reichenau, St Gall, Rheinau and Schuttern.⁴ Even after Charles succeeded to the emperors in 880, to the kingships of both east and west Francia in 882 and 884, respectively, and found himself the sole ruler of the entire Carolingian world after 884, he maintained a high profile on the Alsatian scene, where in 884 he held a general assembly at Colmar and withdrew in 886/7 to recover from a grave illness, probably a stroke.⁵ Among the Carolingian kings, it was Charles the Fat who displayed the most direct interest in Alsace and who developed the complex of royal estates around Colmar that would form a royal hub for later German kings. By all appearances, royal power had remained vigorous in Alsace.

On the other hand, the reduced size of the late Carolingian kingdoms – relative to those Charlemagne's grandsons had received – left kings with limited resources from which to draw. Charles's own behaviour after 884 and the limited reach of his direct authority betray a dependence on a regional, rather than a pan-Carolingian, basis of power.⁶ Moreover, kings increasingly were unable to dominate their aristocracies in the way that, say, Charlemagne had, a consequence not of the limitations of individual kings as such, but of the gradual disappearance of a supra-regional aristocracy and the increasing coherence of regional blocs which now enjoyed, and had come to expect, the nurturing benefits of *Königsnähe*, i.e. the influence that could be obtained by closeness to the king.⁷ Charles the Fat undertook a bold effort to establish a centre of imperial power in the upper-Rhine region which would complement his own strengths and serve to anchor his royal authority. His intentions were manifest in his imaginative plans to organize a new capital in Alsace at Sélestat, which he envisaged as a new Aachen for the empire and which literally would have been centrally located with respect to east Francia, west Francia and Italy.⁸ In reality, Charles sat astride a collection of regional kingdoms which, because of the diffusion of *Königsnähe* over the previous decades, was difficult for one man to rule, a problem compounded by Charles's lack of legitimate heirs and the demographic accidents that had deprived him of candidates from the collateral lines of the family. Consequently, Charles's aspirations ran afoul of entrenched interests, in particular the ambitions of his heirs – especially those of his illegitimate nephew Arnulf, and were torn apart by anxieties about the eventual succession.⁹ In 887, Charles was deposed by Arnulf of Carinthia and, as a result of the dearth of

⁴ *MGHD KIII*, nos. 1, 5, 5a, 6, 63, 101, 108; cf. Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, p. 138.

⁵ *AF*, a. 884, p. 110; 887, p. 115; cf. Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, p. 141; and on Charles's illness, MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, p. 41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 96–9, 120–1.

⁷ Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 115–17; MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 81–3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 187–9. ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 123–98.

Carolingian successors and the demands of *Königsnähe*, non-Carolingian dynasties emerged in other areas of the old Carolingian Empire.

If these factors contributed to Charles's deposition, they were not unique to the late Carolingian period. Factionalism was endemic to the Carolingian order and had intensified during the reigns of Charlemagne's grandsons who, in order to ensure the cooperation of the great magnates and their factions, granted out rights and privileges which in turn strengthened the local dominance of their supporters. Charles the Bald, Lothar I and Lothar II had delegated wide powers over monasteries to lay aristocrats;¹⁰ and Louis the German had made his archchaplain Grimald abbot over several monasteries as a means of consolidating his authority in the southwestern region of his kingdom. It should hardly be surprising then that during the reign of Charles the Fat, Weissenburg, which had been under Grimald's control and, before that, had been governed by abbot-bishops from the major mid-Rhine cities, became the personal appurtenance of Grimald's successor as archchaplain, Archbishop Liutbert of Mainz (870–89), who does not appear to have adopted the title 'abbot'. In 882, Charles the Fat confirmed that Liutbert should hold Weissenburg for the rest of his life, and that upon his death the monks would be free to elect their own abbot.¹¹ Weissenburg did have a well-established tradition of abbot-bishops, but the diploma did not address Liutbert as abbot, and later abbot lists do not include him.¹² After Grimald, the next abbot to appear in the lists is a mid-tenth-century figure, Geilo, an indication that the monks' right to free election remained theoretical long after Liutbert's death (889). The fate of Weissenburg between Liutbert and Geilo is largely unknown, but it appears that the monastery lapsed under the domination of powerful lords such as Liutbert. The freighting of local power was evident among Weissenburg's ordinary patrons who, as we have seen, negotiated advantageous *precariae* to enhance their dominance in particular localities during the reigns of Lothar I and Louis the German.

Yet, where Alsace is concerned, qualifications are in order. While Alsace was home to the powerful Etichonids, it did not possess a large regional aristocracy on the scale of the so-called stem duchies, Alemannia, Saxony, Bavaria and Thuringia. Nor was this aristocracy constituted as a people, as was the case in the stem duchies. As a frontier territory between east and west Francia, Alsace was susceptible to the intervention of kings, so that royal authority remained more immediate in Alsace than in many areas of east Francia long after the deposition of Charles. Consequently, even

¹⁰ Felten, 'Laienäbte', pp. 408–31. ¹¹ *D KIII*, no. 63.

¹² Richard Schreml includes Liutbert in his attempted reconstruction of the abbot list, but he admits that Liutbert does not appear in extant abbot lists, 'Studien', p. 134, and pp. 198–200.

though Arnulf lacked Charles's traditional connections in the southwestern sector of east Francia, he assumed a high profile in Alsace and worked his will variously through the Etichonids and the Bavarian bishop of Strasburg, Baldram, whose appointment Arnulf most likely engineered.¹³

In the late Carolingian period, then, two interlocking processes are detectable: the intensification of aristocratic power and the beginnings of a royal reorganization of Alsace that would come to fruition under the Ottonian kings. At present we shall examine the former, with particular focus on the changes in the relationship between monasteries and their powerful lay patrons in the late Carolingian period; the latter we shall take up in the [next chapter](#). We catch a vivid glimpse of the orientation of family power in a smattering of charters and diplomas and, most poignantly, in two fascinating saints' lives, the *Life of Odilia* from Hohenburg in central Alsace, and the *Life of Deicolus* from Lure, located on the southwestern flanks of the Vosges in northeastern Burgundy. In these sources we can glimpse the thorough dominance that two branches of the Etichonids had achieved over monastic institutions by the early tenth century.

THE DOMINI MONASTERII

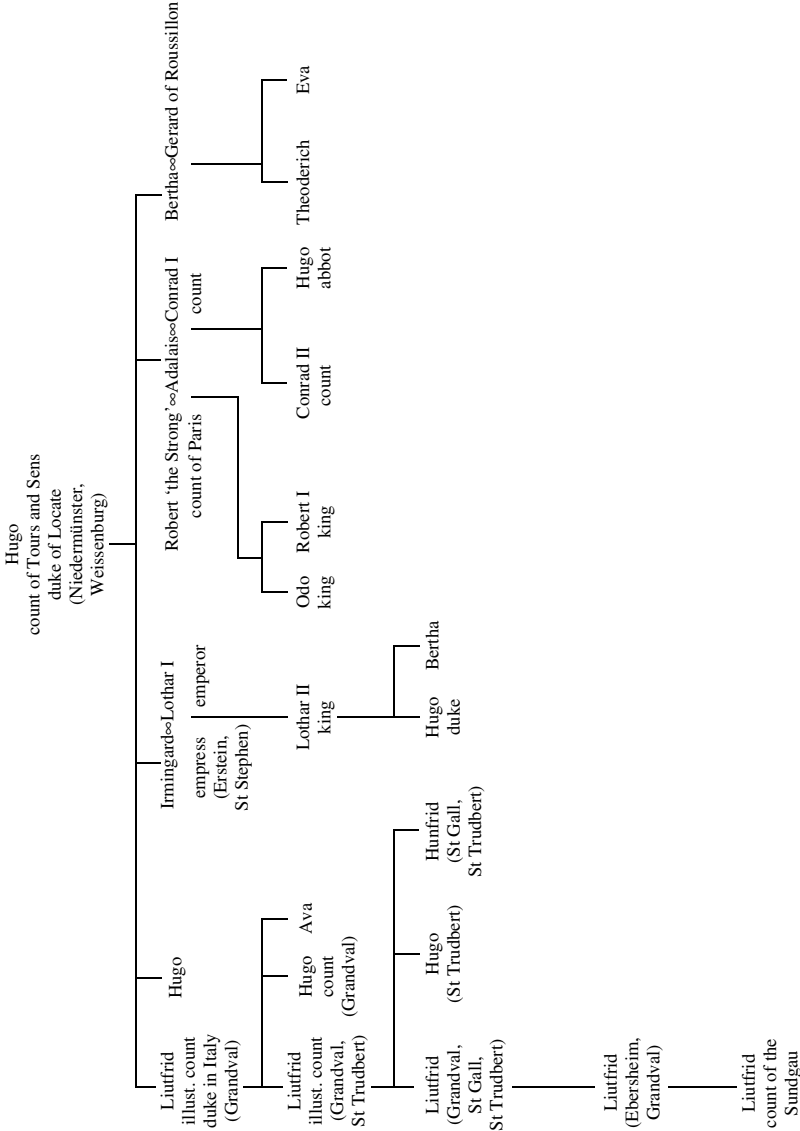
As we have seen, the Etichonids retained their influence in Alsace and in the surrounding areas after the death of Hugo of Tours. Hugo's son Liutfrid was a prominent figure in the middle kingdom and a pivotal advisor during Lothar II's attempts to divorce his wife Theutberga and marry Waltrada. Liutfrid's two sons Hugo and Liutfrid succeeded their father as counts in the middle kingdom and, after 870, in the east Frankish kingdom, although their roles in the wider political affairs of the day are largely unknown. They might have supported Lothar II's bastard son Hugo, who made a bid for royal power in Lotharingia and seems to have commanded some localized support, but he was apprehended by Charles the Fat and died after a blinding in 885.¹⁴ Charles the Fat's assiduous cultivation of Alsace could just as easily indicate that Liutfrid's descendants had remained supportive of the east Frankish king. Whatever their loyalties, Liutfrid and the line of 'Liutfrids' that he spawned remained ensconced in the area until the end of the millennium (see table 6).¹⁵ For a time they

¹³ Borgolte, *Geschichte der Grafengewalt*, pp. 39–40.

¹⁴ *AF*, a. 879, pp. 93–4; 883, p. 100; 885, p. 103; cf. McLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 149–52.

¹⁵ On the Liutfrids, see Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', pp. 21–33; Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 163–75; Langenbeck, 'Probleme', pp. 85–91; Eduard Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen, Bayern und Burgunder in Oberitalien (774–962): Zum Verständnis der fränkischer Königsherrschaft in Italien* (Freiburg, 1960), pp. 221–6; Gerd Althoff, *Amicitiae und Pacta: Bündnis, Einung, Politik und Gebetsgedenken im beginnenden 10. Jahrhundert*, MGH Schriften 37 (Hanover, 1992), pp. 224–34.

Table 6. The later Etichonids I: the family of Hugo of Tours, the Liufriids and associated monasteries



also commanded a lordship in northern Italy, where Hugo of Tours earlier had revived his fortunes, but after 900 the family's influence south of the Alps seems to have evaporated.¹⁶ It was in the north that the family possessed its deepest and longest-lasting roots, roots which were anchored to foundations such as Grandval, the same monastery that the Etichonid duke, Adalrich, had forcibly subjugated in the late seventh century.¹⁷

If the language of grants made to Grandval by Lothars I and II are any indication, the Liutfrids' lordship of the monastery contrasted strikingly with Adalrich's. While Adalrich and his sons had founded and patronized many monasteries and nunneries, having appointed either holy men or daughters and sisters to run them, they are never mentioned as having personally lorded over these foundations. By contrast, Etichonids in the ninth century exercised direct lordship over monasteries. According to a royal diploma of 849, Liutfrid approached his brother-in-law Lothar I and requested that the emperor confirm the grants of immunity and protection that Lothar's father, Louis the Pious, had extended to Grandval.¹⁸ At first glance, Liutfrid's presumption to intercede for the monastery scarcely differs from Adalrich's behaviour centuries earlier. A closer look reveals that whereas in late Merovingian diplomas Etichonid dukes appear alongside their abbots jointly petitioning the ruler for favours,¹⁹ Liutfrid appears in Lothar's confirmation not only alone, but also as the self-styled 'illustrious count and lord of the monastery' (*inluster comes domnusque monasterii*). Lothar then went on to affirm Liutfrid's sweeping control of the monastery, stipulating that 'the said Liutfrid and his successors may possess undisturbed the aforesaid property of the monastery under the protection of our immunity'.

The monastery passed thence to Liutfrid's two sons, first to Hugo and then to his namesake Liutfrid. On behalf of the monks of Grandval, Hugo made his way in 866 to the royal palace at Marlenheim in Alsace and secured from Lothar II the confirmation of an array of properties. Again, the diploma makes no mention of an abbot. Hugo appears as the sole representative of the monastery, his request apparently expedited by close kinship to Lothar, who let it be known that he was moved to confirm the possessions at the request of 'Count Hugo, son of our illustrious maternal uncle Liutfrid'.²⁰ After Hugo died, his brother Count Liutfrid, who had

¹⁶ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 174.

¹⁷ The family seems to have favoured its lordship north of the Alps over its Italian possessions, see Hlawitschka, *Franken*, pp. 222–5.

¹⁸ *D LoI*, no. 105. ¹⁹ Cf. above, chapter 2, pp. 62–3. ²⁰ *D LoII*, no. 28.

been tending the family *honores* in Italy, took control of Grandval.²¹ He appeared in 884 to ask Charles the Fat to reconfirm Lothar's confirmation of 866.²² This Liutfrid appears to have lorded over Grandval up to at least 902, the year that he and his three sons, Liutfrid, Hugo and Hunfrid, jointly founded the monastery of St Trutbert across the upper Rhine in the Black Forest.²³ In 926 we hear of a Liutfrid, presumably the brother of Hugo and Hunfrid, fighting Magyars who were passing through the Black Forest.²⁴ We lose sight of the line for a time, but Grandval presumably remained in family hands up to 968, when Emperor Otto I and King Conrad of Burgundy wrested the monastery from the unnamed son of another Liutfrid who was accused of treating as personal property what had been granted to the family as a royal benefice.²⁵ These accusations make it clear that by the late tenth century the family considered the monastery to be their own property.

The Liutfrids were not the only lords to subject monasteries to overt family control. Another line of Etichonids stemming from a certain Count Eberhard was also busy dominating the affairs of subordinate monasteries.²⁶ Whereas his putative Liutfrid cousins had capitalized on their connections to illustrious Carolingian kin to increase their local control, Eberhard seems to have exploited tensions between Arnulf, who had reconstituted a vigorous royal authority in east Francia, and the Burgundian king Rudolf, to carve out for himself an extensive lordship along the frontier between the two kingdoms.²⁷ Contributing to Eberhard's influence was the unevenness of Arnulf's authority, which was much stronger along the eastern and southeastern frontiers, whence he drew much of his support, and weaker on the southwestern frontier. Sources for the period are fragmentary, but according to the researches of Michael Borgolte, from 888 to sometime after 898 Eberhard exercised authority over a sizeable area that encompassed northern Alsace, some of southern Alsace, the western portion of Alemannia, and portions of northeastern Burgundy.

Echoing the Liutfrids, Count Eberhard controlled the affairs of the monastery at Gregoriental, although our evidence comes to us not from petitions to the king, none of which survive, but rather through the monastery's transactions with lay donors. Similar to Grandval, Gregoriental had been patronized by Etichonid ancestors in the late

²¹ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 173. ²² *D XIII*, no. 108.

²³ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 173–4.

²⁴ Ekkehard IV, *Casus Sancti Galli*, ed. and German trans. Hans F. Haefele, with epilogue by Steffan Patzold (Darmstadt, 1980), c. 64; on the identity of Liutfrid, see Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 175.

²⁵ *Diplomata et acta regum Burgundiae e stirpe Rudolphina*, ed. Theodor Schieffer, with Hans Eberhard Mayer, *MGH* (Munich, 1977), no. 44.

²⁶ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 176–84. ²⁷ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 37–46.

Merovingian period.²⁸ Yet a comparison with earlier practices again reveals fundamental changes in the presentation of lordship. In 675, King Childeric II reported to Duke Adalrich that the Abbot Valedio had asked him to transfer some men to Gregoriental's control.²⁹ The diploma makes it clear that although Adalrich was notified, he had not initiated the request. This contrasts with Count Eberhard's presence in a transaction two centuries later. According to a donation made to the same monastery in 898, a certain Herimuot gave all his property in Eguisheim and Turckheim, including his share of a church, to Gregoriental.³⁰ In exchange for the donation, and also for a yearly rent of five *solidi*, Herimuot and his sons received the right to use the monastery's property in the village of Altdorf. The monks and abbot agreed to the exchange, but the charter is careful to add that the count gave his consent to the transaction. As we approach the end of the charter, we discover that the act of donation transpired not at the monastery, nor at the villages in question, but rather at a public forum in Strasburg 'in the presence of the most illustrious Count Eberhard'. It may be that Herimuot had made his donation within the context of what appears to be a comital court gathering, and that Eberhard simply approved the donation as the verifying legal authority. However, the charter also testifies that Herimuot gave the property 'to that place (i.e. Gregoriental), where the illustrious Count Eberhard is seen to preside as well as Abbot Engilfrid'. Though the charter never calls Eberhard the 'lord of the monastery', it makes clear enough that the count, similar to the Liutfrids at Grandval, dominated Gregoriental's affairs.

MONASTERIES AS SEATS OF LORDSHIP

The dominance of lay aristocrats at monasteries is vividly depicted in two hagiographical texts of the tenth century, the *Life of Odilia* and the *Life of Deicolus*. While these sources largely corroborate the testimony of the charters, they also present a more textured account of the thoughts and assumptions missing from the diplomatic evidence. As the authors of these accounts evoked the rhythms of monasticism in the early tenth century, they also revealed that monasteries had become seats of lordship, transferable from one generation to the next as if they were family property.

The *Life of Odilia* purports to tell the story of Odilia, her cure from blindness, the foundation of Hohenburg by her father Duke Adalrich around 700 and Odilia's tenure as abbess of the monastery.³¹ According to

²⁸ Cf. above, chapter 1, p. 52. ²⁹ *D Merov.*, vol. I, no. 111. ³⁰ *Regesta Alsatie*, no. 650.

³¹ *Vita Odiliae Abbatissae Hohenburgensis*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, *MGH SRM* 6 (Hanover, Leipzig, 1913), pp. 24–50.

Christian Pfister, the *Life* was written shortly after 900, either at Hohenburg or by a person closely associated with the monastery, and thus reveals much more about monasticism in the early tenth century than about the events of the late Merovingian period.³² In his critical edition of the *Life*, Wilhelm Levison agreed with the dating and expanded it slightly to encompass the end of the ninth century.³³ Medard Barth, local expert on Alsatian hagiography and author of an exhaustive two-volume study on the cult of Odilia, preferred the last third of the ninth century, although Pfister's dating is generally accepted in the scholarship and is supported by the weight of manuscript evidence, the earliest of which dates to the mid-tenth century.³⁴ The appearance of the text probably bears some connection to the exercise of Etichonid lordship in the late Carolingian period.³⁵ The estimated date and location of the composition coincide uncannily with the tenure of Count Eberhard, or with the careers of his son and grandsons,³⁶ one of whom appears sometime between 913 and 933 in a charter of the church of Strasburg as the 'count ruling Hohenburg' (*comes Hohenburg regnans*).³⁷

The *Life* celebrates the family's ancient ancestors and appears to have drawn upon existing Odilian legends exploited by the family over the centuries. The earliest textual witness to Odilia appears not in her *Life* but in a tenth-century abridgement of a longer version of the *Life of Hildulph* which originated during the reign of Zwentibold, king in Lotharingia (895–900).³⁸ The *Life of Odilia* also contains striking parallels to an even earlier hagiographical production, the late seventh-century *Life of Sadalberga*. Similar to Sadalberga, Odilia had arisen from a Burgundian family, was the daughter of a seventh-century duke in Alsace and was cured of blindness as a child by a holy man travelling out of Bavaria. She also bears the same name, albeit in Romanized form, as Sadalberga's sister-in-law, Odila. It might also be significant that Sadalberga's brother Leudinus was bishop of the diocese of Toul, in whose confines the *Life of Hildulph* was composed.³⁹ The two *Lives* are not coeval and the *Life of Odilia* shows no detectable, literal reliance on the text of the

³² Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 43–8, 60–1. ³³ Levison, *Vita Odiliae*, p. 28.

³⁴ Medard Barth, *Die heilige Odilia, Schutzherrin des Elsaß: Ihr Kult in Volk und Kirche*, 2 vols. (Strasbourg, 1938), vol. I, pp. 44–5. On the earliest manuscripts see Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 45–6.

³⁵ Fabienne Cardot, 'Le pouvoir aristocratique et le sacré au haut moyen âge: Sainte Odile et les Etichonides dans la *Vita Odiliae*', *Le Moyen Age: Revue d'Histoire et de Philologie* 89 (1983), pp. 173–93.

³⁶ Cardot, 'Le pouvoir aristocratique', pp. 190–1. ³⁷ *Urkundenbuch Strassburg*, vol. I, no. 52.

³⁸ Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 37–8; and Christian Pfister, 'Les légendes de Saint Dié et de Saint Hildulph', *Annales de l'Est* 3 (1889), pp. 377–408, esp. pp. 396–407.

³⁹ Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 63–4; Levison, *Vita Odiliae*, pp. 27–8.

Life of Sadalberga, so it remains doubtful that the author of the former drew directly upon the latter. More likely, the *Life of Odilia* gave particular form to a stock of historical and legendary traditions that had originated in the late seventh or early eighth centuries when the Etichonids were building their lordship in Alsace and attempting to rule in continuity with the highly regarded family of Duke Gundoin.⁴⁰ The themes of family foundation and sanctification in the *Life of Odilia* certainly echo the milieu of the Merovingian period.

Between 700 and 900 the legends surrounding Odilia may have been revived when Hugo of Tours was ascendant and eager to exploit his descent from Duke Adalrich.⁴¹ According to a later medieval legend, Hugo and his spouse Aba had donated to Niedermünster – Odilia's foundation at the foot of Hohenburg – a cross filled with sacred relics given to him by Charlemagne.⁴² The source is often inaccurate in the details (the account, for example, substitutes Charlemagne for the historically correct Louis the Pious), but the story faithfully reproduces the broad outlines of Hugo's career as royal councillor and conspirator against the throne, his condemnation to death and subsequent pardon by the emperor. The gift of a cross stuffed with relics also echoes the practices of Carolingian rulers, who kept cross-shaped reliquaries containing pieces of the True Cross.⁴³ This account of Hugo's alleged patronage of Niedermünster, therefore, probably contains a kernel of truth. Hohenburg certainly had become sufficiently renowned by the year of Hugo's death (837) to merit such a precious gift: that same year the Emperor Louis the Pious, at the request of his queen Judith, granted the monastery immunity and protection.⁴⁴ Whatever their precise genesis and subsequent uses, legends surrounding the sanctification of Odilia probably had proved useful to various generations of Etichonids prior to the composition of the extant *Life*.

The *Life* itself is most revealing as a source about lords and monasteries in the early tenth century.⁴⁵ The account communicates a powerful sense of family entitlement and testifies to the family's charisma, the elixir of lordship that bestowed legitimacy to ruling houses and bolstered their

⁴⁰ Cf. above, chapter 1, pp. 49–55. ⁴¹ See above, chapter 6, p. 158.

⁴² Joseph Walter, 'La croix de Niedermünster: Sa légende – son histoire – son symbolisme', *Archives alsaciennes d'histoire de l'art* 10 (1931), pp. 9–52, esp. pp. 9–27.

⁴³ Eric Goldberg, "'More Devoted to the Equipment of Battle than the Splendour of Banquets': Frontier Kingship, Martial Ritual and Early Knighthood at the Court of Louis the German', *Viator* 30 (1999), pp. 41–78, esp. pp. 60–73.

⁴⁴ *Regesta Alsaciae*, nos. 503, 504.

⁴⁵ On the value of the *Life* as a source for monastic life in the late Carolingian period, see Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 1–68.

dominance. The account opens with a pretentious recollection of the family's pedigree and inbred piety: 'During the time of Emperor [!] Childeric', the *Life* proudly (and erroneously) begins, 'there was a certain illustrious Duke Adalrich, also called by another name Eticho, who issued from the stock of noblest parentage and arose from the territory of Gaul'.⁴⁶ His father was a certain Liutheric, who allegedly had been raised to the lofty position of mayor of the palace. Adalrich married Berswinda, also of noblest ancestry and kinswoman to the celebrated St Leodegar.⁴⁷ Similar to many of the married women we encounter in hagiographies, Berswinda endured marriage and lived out her life as a closet nun. She performed many pious deeds and cherished the biblical injunction that 'those who have spouses should live as though they have none'.

Adalrich, we are told, also wanted to lead a religious life and revealed to his associates a secret desire to 'prepare a place suitable for fulfilling the service of God'.⁴⁸ Eager to please their lord, they discovered from Adalrich's hunters an ideal location on a high mountain, 'which on account of the altitude of the fortification was called Hohenburg, constructed long ago during the reign of King Marcellian on account of its strength and defence against attacks'. Considering the location to be up to the standards of his high birth, 'he ordered a church to be built there and other buildings necessary for the soldiers of Christ'. Adalrich's religious impulses were indistinguishable from his lordly ones because, far from being a place that needed 'discovering', Adalrich had established the monastic settlement at a location of recurring strategic importance. The monastery was built on top of a mountain where the former 'King Marcellian' had built a fortification. The author presumably was referring to a Roman emperor, though none by that name ever existed. A later copyist of the *Life*, who apparently knew more history and was confused by the ascription, inserted 'Maximian' in its place. His command of Roman history aside, the author understood enough about the past to know that an ancient fortification had once occupied the mountain top, the remnants of which survive today in the Roman-era gates of the celebrated *Mur Païen*, the 'Pagan Wall', of Mount St Odile. Archaeological excavations have uncovered the old Roman fort, as well as earlier Neolithic settlement activity and a Celtic Iron-Age *oppidum*.⁴⁹ They have also uncovered a Merovingian necropolis, an indication that the location had been in use not long before Adalrich's hunters

⁴⁶ *Vita Odiliae*, c. 1, p. 37. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 2, p. 38. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 1, p. 37.

⁴⁹ Francis Mantz, *Le mur païen: Histoire et mystères archéologiques autour du Mont Sainte-Odile* (Strasbourg, 1991), pp. 80–122.

'found' it. A trip to the mountain top today still reveals a breath-taking (and commanding) view of the plain below.

The *Life* then turns to the troubling circumstances of Odilia's malformed birth, the child's exile and the implications of both for the family's honour. The author tells us that Berswinda gave birth to a blind daughter who would in time be called Odilia. Berswinda loved the child, but Adalrich was troubled and confessed to his wife that he must have angered God in some way 'because nothing of the sort has befallen any of my family before'.⁵⁰ Berswinda tried to comfort him, saying, 'My lord, don't be sad. I know that the judgement of God has been revealed; that Christ himself responded to his disciples, who questioned him about a man blind from birth, saying that "neither he nor his parents had sinned, but that the works of God were manifest in him".' To no avail. Adalrich still felt ashamed of his blind daughter and looked upon her to be a curse and a stain on the family's reputation. Apparently because he believed that news of the disabled child would only weaken his lordship, he coldly ordered his wife to find a trusted servant to kill the baby in secret.

Berswinda decided to send her daughter into hiding, rather than to follow her husband's harsh judgement. She begged the Lord for guidance, and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit 'began to recall a certain woman whom she intimately raised from infancy in her own home', but whom she had once fired for unspecified misdeeds. Desperate, she contacted the woman, who agreed to raise Odilia.⁵¹ After a year of nursing the baby, the neighbours began to whisper and wonder whence the child had come.⁵² So Berswinda advised the maid to take the child to a monastery called Palma, where a friend would provide for her. With maid in tow, the baby relocated to a monastery. There she grew into a girl, eventually received an education and endured the backbiting of envious colleagues.⁵³

Berswinda turned out to be right. Unbeknown to her, God had taken note of Odilia's plight and turned the child's affliction into an opportunity to bestow divine favour upon the family. The Lord soon appeared in Bavaria to a certain bishop named Erhard and commanded him to go to Palma, where he would find a girl blind from birth: 'Take her, baptize her in the name of the triune majesty, and give her the name Odilia. After the baptism she will immediately regain her vision.'⁵⁴ So Erhard baptized the girl and when he, Sadalberga-style, 'smeared her eyes with chrism, immediately the bindings of her eyes were loosened'. On his return home, the bishop, unaware that Adalrich had already learned of the

⁵⁰ *Vita Odiliae*, c. 2, p. 38. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, c. 3, p. 39. ⁵² *Ibid.*, c. 4, pp. 39–40.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, c. 5, pp. 40–1. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 4, p. 40.

existence of his daughter and her miraculous cure through a heavenly sign, sent a message to the duke explaining everything that had happened.⁵⁵ He urged Adalrich to reconcile himself to Odilia and 'end the devil-incited dissension between them'.

Adalrich's refusal to accept his daughter compounded his problems. If having a deformed child was shameful, his insensitivity to his own kin potentially posed a graver threat to his honour since, we might surmise, a father who let his daughter slip into penury could hardly be counted on to be an effective lord. In the end, the responsibility that others in the family felt toward Odilia, and their sense that the situation was becoming an intolerable embarrassment, was too strong for the duke to suppress for long. Eventually, Odilia decided to contact her brother, 'brought up nobly in the home of her father who loved him very much'.⁵⁶ She wrote him a letter, begging him to remember her. Moved, the brother asked his father 'to recall and have brought back to your presence your daughter, who now lives alone among a foreign people apart from all her kin'. Adalrich ordered his son to desist, but the brother 'sent a cart and other things necessary for making the journey and arranged that she return to a particular location'.

That place was Hohenburg, where Adalrich had founded a monastery and established a seat of lordship. Adalrich, his son and his men were holding court there when at the foot of the mountain 'arrived Odilia, the spouse of Christ, sitting in the cart, as was the custom for travelling during those times, with a large crowd, as her brother had arranged for her'.⁵⁷ When the duke grasped what was happening he demanded, 'Who was so foolish and rash to have presumed to recall her without my permission?' His son stepped forward and pleaded, 'I, your servant, considering that she would bring us into disrepute if she remained in such poverty, and having great compassion for her affliction, recalled her. But now, father, grant me this, because I know I acted very foolishly, when I presumed to recall her without your permission.' Enraged, Adalrich smote him on the head with his rod of lordship, but much harder than he intended. His son slumped to the ground unconscious and died. Adalrich's tantrum had disgraced himself and his family far beyond what Odilia's blindness ever could have managed. From then until his death, a mournful Adalrich persevered in the monastery, visited holy shrines, pleaded to the saints for their intercession and otherwise sought to reconcile himself to God for his crime.

The picture that subsequently emerges in the *Life* is that of a penitent lord who imperiously administered his foundation. The site that had

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 6, p. 41.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, c. 7, p. 41-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 8, p. 42.

served as a seat of lordship where Adalrich held court with his men now became his permanent residence. He was the lord of the monastery, the type of person whom Odilia 'did not presume to approach uninvited'.⁵⁸ There was no abbess. His heart softened somewhat toward his daughter but, still unwilling to embrace her, Adalrich assigned Odilia to a British nun and granted her a maid servant's wage.⁵⁹ Odilia endured this humiliating condition and was generally ignored by her father. After a time, growing old and fretting about his legacy and salvation, Adalrich reconciled himself with Odilia and handed over the monastery to his daughter as if it were a private possession:

One day while [Odilia] was carrying grain in a vessel under her robe, with which she covered herself, her father encountered her beneath the septa of the monastery. He now put aside his rigid disposition and with divine inspiration addressed her mercifully, saying, 'My most kindly daughter, whence have you come, where are you going and what are you carrying?' She stopped and responded, 'I am carrying a bit of grain, lord, so that I can make from it some food to bring relief to the needy.' Then he said, 'Don't be sad, that so far you have led a life of poverty, because, God willing, the time is at hand, when you will overcome this.' And on that day he handed over the aforesaid monastery with all its belongings into her hands, imploring her together with the holy congregation to intercede zealously on behalf of his memory to restrain God for his sin. And not living much after that time, he had his last day.⁶⁰

When we compare the language of this passage with that found in private donation charters, we see that Adalrich had transferred the monastery to his daughter as if it were his own property. According to the author of the *Life*, Adalrich 'handed over (*tradidit*) into her hands (*in manibus illius*) the aforesaid monastery (*praefatum monasterium*) with all its appurtenances (*cum omnibus appendiciis*)' so that Odilia would remember to intercede with the whole congregation on his behalf and mollify the judgement of God. In donation formulas, typically donors 'thinking of the fear of God and for the remedy of my soul and favourable eternal reward' give (*trado*) property to the aforesaid monastery (*ad ipsum praefatum monasterium*). There then follows a formula which lists all possible types of property that might pertain to the donation, 'the meadows, forests, pastures, waters, vines, etc., and appurtenances (*appendicia*), etc'.⁶¹

It now was left to Odilia to repair the family's reputation and reconstitute the honour damaged by Adalrich's intemperate and reckless behaviour. Already sanctified herself by baptism and her miraculous cure from blindness, Odilia first applied her saintly powers to the cultivation of her

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 43.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 9, p. 42.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 43.

⁶¹ Cf. *Formulae Salicae Lindenbergianae*, no. 2.

father's memory and the improvement of his situation in the afterlife. When it was revealed to her that her father was suffering for his sins in a place of torment, she was grief-stricken.⁶² But one day while Odilia was praying fervently for her father's absolution, a heavenly voice intoned, 'Odilia, chosen by God, allay the anxiety of your burden because you have obtained from the Lord the remission of your father's sins. Behold! Freed from the inferno, he is led by angels and placed among the chorus of patriarchs.'

František Graus, the pioneering scholar of early medieval hagiography, presumably would have been unsurprised by any of this. He lumped the *Life of Odilia* with a number of other early medieval *Lives* on the basis of what he considered to be the rather conventional, hagiographical treatment of nobles and claimed that 'the type of a mighty lord, who as a noble became holy or through his activity sanctified his family, is in the Merovingian and Carolingian period unknown'.⁶³ Saints could only become holy, he felt, by renouncing their nobility. However, as Pfister pointed out long ago, the romantic turn that occurs when Odilia redeems her father from punishment sets this *Life* off from others of the early medieval period and probably explains its great popularity, which is evident in the rapid and wide dissemination of its manuscripts throughout the upper-Rhine region, and then beyond to Bavaria, Lotharingia, eastern France and England.⁶⁴ Adalrich may not have become holy by himself, but with the help of his daughter he eventually was able to join the company of saints. In the twelfth century, Adalrich was accorded the title 'saint' at Hohenburg, and his burial garments were displayed as relics for pilgrims who visited the monastic church; and by the early fourteenth century his feast day was celebrated yearly by the nuns of the monastery.⁶⁵ Whether anyone honoured Adalrich as a saint in the tenth century is unknown, but the *Life* would have justified it.

The author goes on to describe Odilia's subsequent efforts to extend her family's influence and fortify its charisma. As Odilia's *Life* was read to the congregation of monks, nuns and laity on feast days, it would have reminded its listeners that those who aided the family could expect kindness and divine favour. For Odilia had not forgotten the nurse who cared for her in her infancy, and when the maid died the saint had a respectable grave dug for her. To the surprise of the monastic

⁶² *Vita Odiliae*, c. 12, p. 44.

⁶³ František Graus, 'Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Hagiographie der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit: Die Viten der Heiligen des südelemanischen Raumes und die sogenannten Adelsheiligen', in Borst ed., *Mönchtum, Episcopat und Adel*, pp. 131–76, esp. pp. 169–76.

⁶⁴ Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, pp. 61–5; Barth, *Die heilige Odilia*, vol. I, pp. 76–91.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59; Pfister, *Le duché mérovingien d'Alsace*, p. 62.

community, when the grave was opened eighty years later to make room for another body, the author reports that the maid's right breast, the breast that had nursed the holy Odilia, 'was found incorrupt and whole, as if at that moment it had been cut off from a body'.⁶⁶ On the other hand, listeners would have been warned that those who crossed the family could expect divine wrath. When a servant of the monastery killed one of Odilia's brothers, the abbess pleaded to the Lord to avenge the crime on earth, rather than in the hereafter.⁶⁷ Her wish was mercilessly granted when every child born to the man suffered debilities. God clearly favoured Odilia's family and its friends.

Odilia also extended the scope of the foundation and continued to put it at the service of her family until her death. She allegedly governed a disciplined monastery of 130 maidens⁶⁸ and was soon joined by Gundlinda, Attala and Eugenia, the daughters of her brother Duke Adalbert,⁶⁹ the third of whom probably succeeded Odilia as abbess.⁷⁰ Odilia also founded at the foot of Hohenburg another monastery, Niedermünster, more accessible to pilgrims, the poor and the sick;⁷¹ organized Hohenburg and Niedermünster according to the canonical rule;⁷² and built a chapel to John the Baptist in honour of her baptismal cure.⁷³ At the end of her life, as she lay on her death-bed, Odilia called the sisters together in the chapel of St John the Baptist and admonished them to obey the Lord and to 'intercede diligently for her, her father, and the rest of her immediate kin'.⁷⁴ She then ordered them off to the church of St Mary to celebrate the Psalms. While they were chanting, Odilia's soul was released and the whole house was filled with a pleasant aroma. The nuns returned to find their mother dead and were exceedingly distressed when they realized she had not received communion before expiring. They fervently prayed to resuscitate her, and in a startling scene, Odilia's corpse rose and ordered the chalice holding the body and blood of Christ brought to her.⁷⁵ She took it in her hands, gave herself communion and then gave up her ghost.

MONASTERIES AS HERITABLE FAMILY PROPERTY

The *Life of Deicolus*, written at the monastery of Lure in the late tenth century in the charged atmosphere of monastic reform, presents a hostile view of Etichonid stewardship of monasteries. The author's subject, St Deicolus, was purportedly a disciple of Columbanus and the founder

⁶⁶ *Vita Odiliae*, c. 10, pp. 42–3. ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 20, p. 48. ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 13, p. 44.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 19, pp. 47–8. ⁷⁰ Cf. above, chapter 2, p. 65. ⁷¹ *Vita Odiliae*, c. 14, pp. 44–5.

⁷² *Ibid.*, c. 16, p. 46. ⁷³ *Ibid.*, c. 17, pp. 46–7. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 22, p. 49. ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 23, p. 50.

of Lure. The *Life* knows little about the historical figure, who probably was not an immediate disciple of Columbanus, but probably the same Abbot Deicolus to whom Bobolenus had addressed his *Life of Germanus of Grandval* around 680.⁷⁶ The author's real interest was the more recent history of the monastery, which Count Eberhard and his line had audaciously subordinated to Etichonid control in the late ninth and tenth centuries, and the living power of Deicolus and his tomb, which reportedly foiled and humbled the family.⁷⁷ We shall deal more extensively with this *Life* and its hostility to the family in the [next chapter](#), but let it suffice for the present to extract what it recalls about the supremacy of family rights at Lure during the late Carolingian and the immediate post-Carolingian period.

The *Life of Deicolus* admits that the family of Count Eberhard was able to treat the monastery as an heirloom for three generations from around 885 to 959. The *Life* concedes that Count Eberhard had taken over the monastery *in hereditatem*, 'as his inheritance', on the pretext of consanguinity, and was able to pass it on to his sons.⁷⁸ The author of the *Life* regarded all this with great indignation, but the situation he depicted coincides with the approving portrayal of similar behaviour in the *Life of Odilia*, and we again encounter a monastery which served the wishes of its patrons as a lordly residence. Lure, we are told, abetted Eberhard's aristocratic pursuits as a place which cared for his horses and kennelled his hunting dogs.⁷⁹ The monastery then passed by inheritance to Eberhard's son Count Hugo. Hugo reportedly claimed everything his father had held 'by law or wrongfully by force', 'among them the holy place of Deicolus'.⁸⁰ Hugo was generously endowed with male heirs and considered himself 'almost royal', living there 'invincibly like a lord in his castle'. He lorded over Lure with his three sons, Hugo, Guntram and Eberhard, who were said to retire there, give thanks to God, eat and sleep.⁸¹ When Lure and its environs were devastated by Hungarian raiders, Hugo and his three sons undertook to revive the monastery and recruited a local holy man to restore monastic life.⁸² However appalled the author might have been at the thought of lay control, his chafing

⁷⁶ Wattenbach and Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, pp. 136–7.

⁷⁷ The *Life of Deicolus* was edited by P. F. Chifflet for the *Acta Sanctorum*, 18 January, vol. II (Antwerp, 1643), pp. 199–210; and a portion of it (*Ex Vita sancti Deicoli*) by Georg Waitz for the *MGH SS* 15, 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 674–82. The complete text appears in the *Acta* as the *Vita Sancti Deicoli Abbatis Lutrensi*. The latter half of the *Life*, which deals with ninth- and tenth-century events closer to the author's own day, was re-edited for the *MGH* apparently because it was considered to contain useful narrative material. It appears in the *MGH* as *Ex Vita sancti Deicoli* (see above).

⁷⁸ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 13, p. 679. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 12, p. 677. ⁸⁰ *Ibid.* ⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, cc. 11, p. 677; 15, p. 680.

reveals just how complete Etichonid dominance of Lure was in the early tenth century.

Both accounts, the *Life of Odilia* and the *Life of Deicolus*, show the extent to which late Carolingian lords centred their lordships on monastic foundations, often the same monasteries their ancestors had endowed or patronized centuries before. Although Odilia's hagiographer generally approves of family control, one does detect some discomfort with lordship that might become too overbearing. Adalrich's unflattering behaviour suggests that the *Life of Odilia* represents more than a sop for more lay patronage, or a shameless attempt at flattery. When we recall that sometime between 913 and 933 Count Eberhard's grandson Hugo, the self-styled 'count ruling Hohenburg', was controlling the monastery, the author of the *Life* may have also sought to tame the harsher impulses of Hohenburg's lords. What aristocratic lord upon hearing the *Life* recited could have failed to notice the price the stern Adalrich had paid for his domineering behaviour as husband, father and lord? What price might similar heavy-handedness incur? Subversive wives and children? Death of heirs? Impiety? A blindness to divine omens and warnings? Damnation?

On the other hand, the *Life* did hold out solutions: humility, penance, mercy, rededication to religious life and patronage. It was fine for lords to involve themselves in monasteries, so long as they realized the limits of their power and exercised their lordship with temperance and wisdom. Unfortunately for many lords, including the later Etichonids, as the tenth century wore on monks in other cloisters, such as those residing at Lure, came to harsher conclusions, with radical implications for family lordship: secular control precluded a healthy spiritual life and lay lords should become the servants, rather than the masters, of monasteries.

THE TENTH-CENTURY TRANSFORMATION

The political order in early medieval Alsace was transformed in the tenth century, when monasteries began to emancipate themselves from lay domination. As was the case elsewhere in east Francia, and in Burgundy beyond the east Frankish kingdom, monastic reform in Alsace progressed with the acquiescence of the lay aristocracy.¹ Later, in the eleventh century, the reform popes were able to build upon these impulses and harness lay piety and unrest to redefine the relationship between royal and ecclesiastical authority.² Meanwhile, in the tenth century, monastic reform in the Vosges – indeed in many other regions of east Francia – was profoundly shaped by a newly assertive royal authority administered by the Ottonian kings, the dynasty that succeeded the Carolingians in east Francia.³

The energy of the Ottonian dynasty was not apparent from its inception under Henry, the duke in Saxony, who succeeded the reputedly ill-fated reign of the Franconian duke Conrad, who had succeeded the last Carolingian king in the east, Louis the Child. Henry did successfully organize defences against Magyar raids and fashioned a system of cooperative rule with the by now entrenched regional dukes.⁴ For much of his reign, Henry left Alsace to its own devices. Partly, this was a logical outgrowth of the horizontal rulership he fostered with the dukes, which in Alsace meant deference to Duke Burchard of Swabia, whose

¹ See Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons*; and Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of St. Peter*.

² Karl Schmid, 'Adel und Reform in Schwaben', in Josef Fleckenstein ed., *Investiturstreit und Reichsverfassung*, Vorträge und Forschungen 17 (Sigmaringen, 1973), pp. 295–319.

³ On the relationship of monastic reform to royal power in Germany, see Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 7–11, 34–58.

⁴ See Gerd Althoff and Hagen Keller, *Heinrich I. und Otto der Grosse: Neubeginn und karolingisches Erbe*, 2 vols., *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* (Göttingen, Zurich, 1985), pp. 66–101; and Althoff, *Amicitiae und Pacta*, pp. 3–87.

sphere of influence encompassed the southwestern sector of the east Frankish realm.⁵ It was also due to the general absence of an active royal presence in Alsace from the start of Henry's reign, a state of affairs that had existed since the death of Louis the Child, when Conrad, Rudolf I of Burgundy and the west Frankish king, Charles the Simple, had vied for Lotharingia and Alsace, with none able to impose their authority.⁶ The state of political uncertainty was exacerbated by the burning in 912 of Strasburg by a force of Lotharingians and the incursions of Magyars in the immediate aftermath, and again in 917.⁷ Yet the remoteness of royal power from Alsace was anomalous and short-lived. Henry's son Otto I reasserted east Frankish hegemony over the kingdom of Burgundy and, within the context of this initiative, pursued a more vertical style of rulership which left a profound mark on Alsace.⁸

In many respects, the Ottonians projected their power in Alsace by means similar to those of their Carolingian predecessors. Exploiting the patterns established by Louis the German, Charles the Fat and especially Arnulf, they strengthened the lines of episcopal authority in the dioceses of Strasburg and Basle.⁹ In addition, in the tradition of Carolingian kings dating back to Pippin and Charlemagne, the Ottonians granted or confirmed privileges or immunities to monasteries at Ebersheim, Erstein, Murbach and Weissenburg.¹⁰ The Ottonians' spouses, Adelheid and Theophanu, after the manner of the Carolingian empresses Judith, Irmingard and Richgarda, also patronized existing monasteries and founded new ones at Payerne and Seltz.¹¹ We also notice that the preferred stop on the royal itinerary in Alsace was an old Carolingian favourite, Erstein, where Lothar and Irmingard had established a monastery in the late 840s, and where Irmingard herself had been entombed.¹²

⁵ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 150–3.

⁶ *Annales Alamannici*, a. 912, 913, pp. 188–9; cf. Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 147–50.

⁷ *Regesta Alsatie*, nos. 680, 686.

⁸ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 155–70. On Otto's more authoritarian approach to governance, see Althoff and Keller, *Heinrich I. und Otto der Grosse*, pp. 112–58.

⁹ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 169, 176–7.

¹⁰ *Diplomata Ottonis I*, ed. Theodor Sickel, in *MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae* 1: *Diplomata Conradi I., Heinrici I. et Ottonis I.*, nos. 121 (Weissenburg), 287 (Weissenburg); *D OII*, nos. 15 (Weissenburg), 155 (Murbach), 79a, pp. 883–4 (Erstein); *Diplomata Ottonis III*, ed. Theodor Sickel, *MGH Diplomatum regum et imperatorum Germaniae*, 2, 2 (Hanover, 1893), nos. 274 (Ebersheim), 47 (Murbach), 43 (Weissenburg), 93 (Weissenburg), 125 (Weissenburg).

¹¹ Payerne was founded jointly by Adalheid, Otto's queen, and Berta, queen of Burgundy. Although the monastery was located in Burgundy, it was supported in part with a complex of fiscal properties around Colmar; see Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 167–8, 175, 177–80.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 130–1, 159–61, and p. 175. On Irmingard's interment at Erstein, see Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, *MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini* 2, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin, 1884), no. 89, pp. 239–40.

Finally Otto I, as had Charlemagne of old, suppressed the Etichonids and raised up other men as counts in Alsace.¹³

Despite the continuities, plenty had changed. The Ottonian revision of episcopal and comital power brought forth a more sharply defined regional administration. Building upon the groundwork laid earlier by Arnulf, whose struggles with Rudolf I of Burgundy had already stimulated the division of Alsace into northern and southern districts (the *Nordgau* and the *Sundgau*) along the boundary between the dioceses of Strasburg and Basle, Otto and his successors organized Alsace into two counties which broke along these same diocesan and district boundaries (see map 8).¹⁴ At the same time that they raised up new counts in the area, the Ottonian kings also encouraged the extension of ducal authority.¹⁵ The Swabian duke, Hermann, was involved in Otto II's activities pertaining to Strasburg;¹⁶ and Hermann's successor, Duke Conrad, was pretentiously styled in two charters of Otto III as the 'duke of the Alemans and Alsatians'.¹⁷ Similarly, in the Burgundian Gate, Otto I encouraged the intermediating authority of Rudolf, duke in Burgundy.¹⁸ The effort to facilitate ducal oversight, it should be pointed out, was not especially successful, in part because Alsace and the Burgundian Gate were peripheral to these two dukes' centres of power, partly because the native Alsatian aristocracy remained distinct from the Burgundian and Alemannic aristocracies (although it never was large or powerful enough to constitute itself as a separate stem-duchy), but mostly because Alsace remained a redoubt of royal power. As Heinrich Büttner observed long ago, Alsace was – in contrast to so many other regions of east Francia – an Ottonian *Reichsland*, a place where royal authority remained forceful in local affairs.¹⁹ Only in the twelfth century was Alsace brought under the dominance of the Swabian dukes (who in any case doubled as the Staufer kings).²⁰

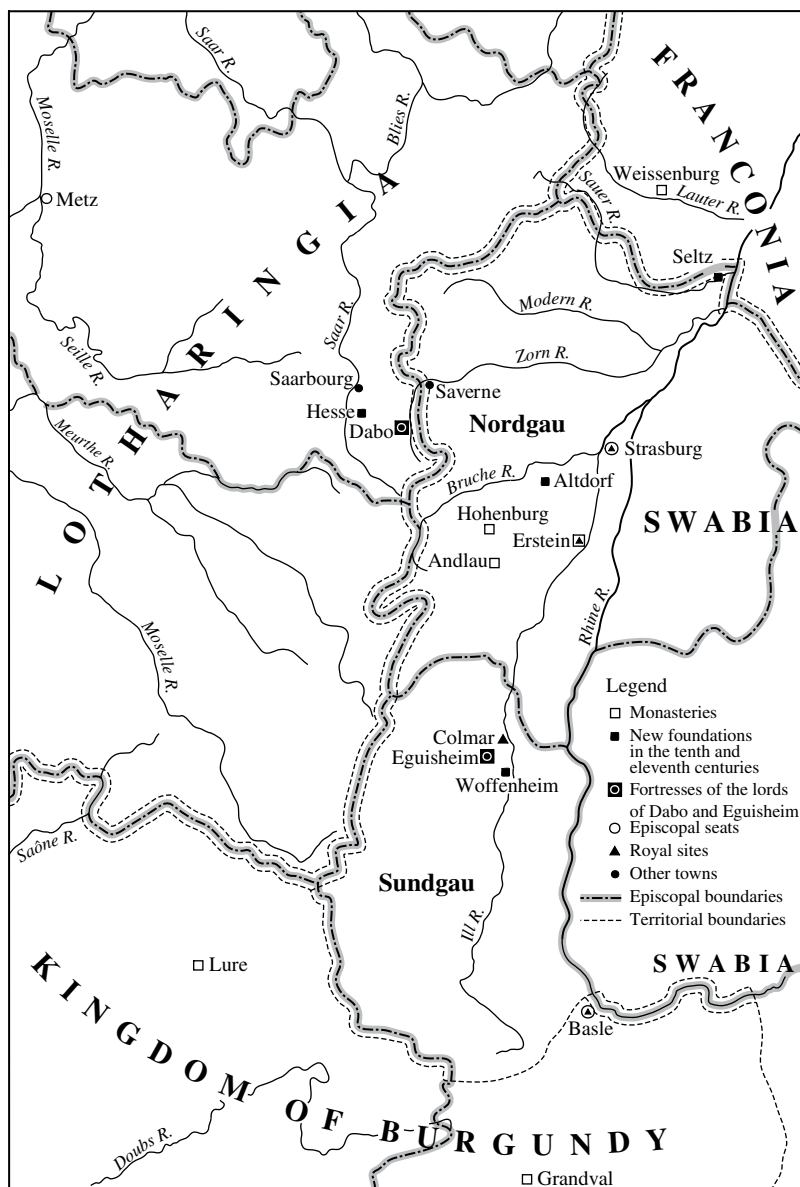
Lastly, royal patronage of monasteries was negotiated differently in the Ottonian period. In contrast to the preceding era, when monastic reform was subsumed within the factional politics of the Carolingian Empire, reformers of the late tenth century sharply distinguished secular from sacred power. They insisted on complete freedom from secular

¹³ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 50–1. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–54.

¹⁵ Thomas Zotz, *Breisgau und das Alemannische Herzogtum: Zur Verfassungs- und Besitzgeschichte im 10. und beginnenden 11. Jahrhundert*, Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband 15 (Sigmaringen, 1974), pp. 11–140.

¹⁶ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 154–5, p. 157 and p. 179. ¹⁷ *D OIII*, nos. 47, 130.

¹⁸ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 165–7. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 170–1. ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 179.



Map 8 Alsace in the tenth century

domination and looked not simply to the king for support, but also to Rome.²¹ Initially, this antagonism to lay domination did not manifest itself as a general hostility to lay influence. In Alsace, as in many areas of Europe, reform was propelled by the earnest piety of lay aristocrats who sincerely believed that monasteries free to govern their own affairs produced holier monks and more efficient institutions.²² Eventually, agitation for reform did conspire with an ambitious Ottonian kingship to alter the local balance of power.

The inspiration for these more radical impulses did not originate with the Ottonian rulers or the popes; rather it arose from a confluence of older Carolingian precedents, contemporary developments and indigenous Alsatian factors. The ideals of ecclesiastical reform that Carolingian rulers had encouraged had never been forgotten within the walls of monasteries and were revived in the tenth century as energetic abbots creatively tapped this reserve of memory.²³ Stripped of their context, the old Carolingian capitularies seemed to invoke a past when monasteries and churches operated under strict ecclesiastical control. A more immediate influence on many of the reform-minded in Alsace was Cluny, the greatest reformed monastery of the tenth century and a model of ecclesiastical freedom.²⁴ Cluniac ideals were welcomed early on in Alsace not because they were self-evidently superior, but because native developments already had prepared a receptive ground. The monastery of Andlau, for example, which had been placed under papal protection by Richgarda and Charles the Fat to ensure its autonomy (c. 881–4), provided a local model of reform that was widely imitated.²⁵ The combination of papal protection and royal oversight as a means of ensuring ecclesiastical independence became a popular formulation throughout the region at Lure and Weissenburg, and at the new foundations of Payerne, Seltz and the priorate at Colmar.²⁶ In time, this

²¹ Joachim Wollasch, *Mönchtum des Mittelalters zwischen Kirche und Welt* (Munich, 1973), pp. 158–67; Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe*, pp. 113–19; and Heinrich Büttner, 'Verfassungsgeschichte und lothringische Klosterreform', in Josef Engle and Hans Martin Klinkenberg eds., *Aus Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Gerhard Kallen zum 70. Geburtstag* (Bonn, 1957), pp. 17–27.

²² On the relations between lay aristocrats and monasteries in the tenth century, see Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, trans. Patrick J. Geary (Chicago, 1991), pp. 147–52; Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, pp. 154–69; and Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons*.

²³ Josef Semmler, 'Das Erbe der karolingischen Klosterreform im 10. Jahrhundert', in Kottje and Maurer eds., *Monastische Reformen*, pp. 29–77.

²⁴ Büttner, 'Papsturkunden für das Elsaß bis 1198', *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte* 15 (1941/2), pp. 1–12, esp. p. 11.

²⁵ *D KIII*, no. 96, pp. 156–7; cf. Büttner, 'Papsturkunden', p. 7.

²⁶ Cf. Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 139–40, 167–8.

indigenous formulation would come to have a great influence beyond Alsace in the eleventh century.²⁷

These reforms were neither systematically nor uniformly applied throughout Ottonian Alsace.²⁸ Monasteries such as Murbach and Erstein remained under royal control and were reformed along Roman lines only much later, under the pressure of papal reform in the twelfth century.²⁹ Of those that were reformed early on, a variety of approaches is evident. The new foundations at Payerne, Seltz and Colmar were organized along Cluniac lines, although the initiative in these cases lay with the queens, rather than the kings.³⁰ Other monasteries were reformed within the context of Ottonian episcopal reorganization. Grandval, for example, was granted its independence and eventually placed under the bishops of Basle.³¹ Still others, such as Weissenburg, were reformed by means of the interplay of episcopal, ducal and royal ambitions. As part of an effort to build up the power of the archbishopric of Magdeburg and emancipate it from Mainz's claims to superior archepiscopal jurisdiction, Otto I placed Magdeburg under the authority of Rome and in 968 awarded it control of Weissenburg, thereby removing the monastery from its long attachment to the Rhenish bishops.³² By means of this complex rearrangement of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, Weissenburg's freedom was conjoined with royal and papal protection.

The extent of Magdeburg's control over Weissenburg apparently was a matter of interpretation. Five years later Empress Adelheid, who had been looking after Weissenburg's interests since the reign of Otto I, when she successfully petitioned her husband in 951 and 965 to reassign dues paying persons to the monastery, successfully intervened in 973 with her son Otto II to reassert Weissenburg's right as a traditional royal monastery to free election and liberty, only to have her son confirm the transfer of Weissenburg to Magdeburg and reaffirm Magdeburg's right of jurisdiction and final word on any elections two years later.³³ During the reign of

²⁷ Büttner, 'Papsturkunden', p. 10; and Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 178–9.

²⁸ See in general on Ottonian reform, Timothy Reuter, 'The "Imperial Church System" of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: A Reconsideration', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32 (1982), pp. 347–74.

²⁹ *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. Paul Kehr: *Germania Pontificia*, ed. Albert Brackmann, vol. II: *Provincia Maguntinensis*, pt 2: *Helvetia Pontificia: Dioeceses Constantiensis II et Curiensis et Episcopatus Sedunensis, Genevensis, Lausannensis, Basiliensis* (Berlin, 1927), pp. 277, 280; and vol. III: *Provincia Maguntinensis*, pt 3: *Dioeceses Strassburgensis, Spirensis, Wormatiensis, Wirzburgensis, Bambergensis* (Berlin, 1935), pp. 31–2.

³⁰ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 167–8, 179–80.

³¹ Büttner, 'Studien zur Geschichte', pp. 21–3.

³² *D OI*, no. 365; cf. Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 174–5.

³³ *D OI*, nos. 121 and 287; and *D OII*, nos. 43, 92 and 93.

Otto III, the Salian duke Otto brought Weissenburg under his control by force.³⁴ On the surface, Duke Otto's high-handed behaviour recalls the dominance of a late Carolingian lord, but even here the rules of the game, so to speak, had been fundamentally altered by the constraints of reform. At the request of Duke Otto (who acted on behalf of Abbot Gerric) and the Rhenish bishops of Worms and Mainz, and 'for the love of the eternal king St Peter', Otto III confirmed Weissenburg's right to free election.³⁵ That is, the Salians exercised influence over Weissenburg as advocates, not as proprietary lords, and the monastery's rights ultimately were tied to Rome.

The immediacy of royal power and the intensity of reform make Alsace an intriguing contrast to the rest of east Francia. Presumably because of its anomalous position in the Ottonian kingdom, Alsace either has been ignored amid the general preoccupation with the birth of the stem-duchies of high medieval Germany or is misrepresented as an appendage of Swabia and mistakenly depicted as distant from royal lordship before the reign of Henry II.³⁶ As Heinrich Büttner observed in 1939 – an observation that still resonates today – the scholarship must account for the unique role of Alsace in the great ecclesiastical reforms of the tenth and eleventh centuries.³⁷ In Alsace, royal authority and radical reform worked synergistically to redefine the relationship of secular to spiritual power and, thus, to transform the institutional basis of early medieval lordship. Although we shall limit ourselves here to an analysis of the Alsatian situation, the changes that began so precociously there foreshadowed the developments that shook east Francia to its roots in the eleventh century.

Let us turn again to the *Life of Deicolus* and carefully examine the struggle between the Etichonids and reformist monks for control of the monastery at Lure, a dispute which was bound up with the larger forces of monastic reform and Ottonian consolidation. From this account we can observe the clash of four jurisdictions within the context of Ottonian reorganization: the hereditary rights that late Carolingian families claimed over monasteries; the prerogatives of early medieval rulers acquired by granting rights and privileges to monasteries; the claims of tenth-century monastic reformers to independence from lay control; and the hereditary

³⁴ *Annales Weissenburgenses*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, *Lamperti Monachi Hersfeldensis Opera*, MGH SRG (Hanover, Leipzig, 1894), a. 985, p. 47.

³⁵ *D OIII*, no. 125.

³⁶ See, for example, Eckhard Müller-Mertens, 'The Ottonians as Kings and Emperors', in Timothy Reuter ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. III: c. 900–c. 1024 (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 233–54, esp. p. 264.

³⁷ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 178–9.

rights of the patron saints of monasteries that trumped the competing claims of family, bishop and king. The resolution of these claims, a flashpoint in the final demise of Etichonid lordship in Alsace, represents more generally the beginning of the end of a distinctive early medieval political order in Alsace which had first taken shape in the seventh century.

FAMILY RIGHTS AND MONASTIC REFORM

In the [previous chapter](#) we saw that during the late Carolingian period the Etichonids had consolidated Lure as a seat of lordship and passed it on as heritable property, but that by the late tenth century their claims were challenged by monastic reformers. Not surprisingly, the *Life of Deicolus*, composed at the behest of the reformist abbot of Lure to justify the monks' claims to independence, was hostile toward the period of lay control when the monastery was overrun 'with sordid secular people',³⁸ and involved too much in the affairs of 'the world, which is evil'.³⁹ For the author, abuses could be prevented or explained by the sexual proclivities of his protagonists. He pointedly informs his readers that Baltram, the reforming abbot of Lure, and his successor Werdulf, practised the celibate life and avoided the company of women,⁴⁰ as had the legendary seventh-century founder of Lure, Deicolus, and his successor Columbinus.⁴¹ More often, the hostility toward the 'world' and the alleged malfeasance of proprietary lords took the form of an attack on the assumed dissoluteness of lay women and men. In contrast to the earlier *Lives* of Sadalberga and Odilia, in which a family's reputation was augmented by the dedication of its holy women to monastic life or by the patronage of its men, the women and men who appear in the *Life of Deicolus* are depicted as threats to the spiritual health of the monastery. In the case of women, lustfulness reinforced stereotypes of fickleness and insincerity of purpose; and in the case of intrusive men, licentiousness was part and parcel of a male proclivity toward violence and domination.

The author of the *Life of Deicolus* first charged that Eberhard, 'a certain war-mighty count from Alsace', had 'invaded that place' and seized Lure wrongfully by force.⁴² He quickly abandoned this straightforward explanation and elaborated a second, more sordid account, which linked Eberhard's possession of Lure to Lothar II's scandalous attempt to marry his concubine Waltrada in the 860s.⁴³ As he tells it, Lothar had given the abbey of St Deicolus to the 'whore' Waltrada as part of a 'hellish dowry'.

³⁸ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 12, p. 677. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 678. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, cc. 14, p. 680; 15, p. 682.

⁴¹ *Vita Sancti Deicoli*, c. 28, p. 206. ⁴² *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 12, p. 677. ⁴³ *Ibid.*, c. 13, pp. 678–9.

Waltrada then allegedly 'usurped the holy place', settled in a place called St Quintin, and subsequently 'devastated everything that belonged to the holy father [Deicolus]'. After the pope reconciled Lothar with his lawful queen, messengers of the wily 'witch' Waltrada intercepted the king and showed him her brothel vestments, the sight of which 'kindled Lothar with fires of madness and hatred'. Enraged, the king rashly decided to behead the queen, but before he could act a disease exterminated him and his men the following morning.

Motivated by fear of the queen rather than remorse, Waltrada feigned devotion to the monastic life and 'entered Remiremont a hypocrite'. Soon she began to grieve that 'the place of saint Deicolus had been taken from her' and 'to complain in the manner of women as if she had been disinherited'.⁴⁴ Count Eberhard now rushed onto the scene and 'on the pretext of consanguinity undertook a great crime and committed the holy place to her under the protection of his advocacy'. When 'the abominable woman' finally died, Eberhard took the place 'as his inheritance' and embarked on a similar career of lust and divorce. He repudiated his lawful wife Adalinda, mingled with 'whores' and then married a nun from the monastery Erstein. The author darkly hinted that Eberhard continued to mistreat his ex-wife but refused to elaborate, claiming that 'integrity does not permit mention of what he did next to Adalinda'.

The scorn for meddling women also was elaborated in a cautionary tale about Eberhard's daughter-in-law Hildegard, who visited the tomb of Deicolus in the hope of obtaining a relic to take back to Alsace.⁴⁵ When the countess and her associates tried to remove the lid from the saint's sarcophagus, Deicolus allegedly signalled his displeasure with lightning, thunder and an earthquake. Hildegard and her company were stunned and blinded for two hours but pressed on undeterred. The countess bravely approached the tomb, quickly 'ripped out' a tooth from Deicolus's successor, Columbinus, and closed up the sepulchre. As she looked over the unimpressive tooth 'she began to doubt in the manner of women whether she should venerate as a relic' what had been so easily obtained. Disappointed, she tossed the tooth onto some hot coals. The tooth gave out a loud clacking sound and leapt from the fire. Disabused of her doubts, the countess retrieved the relic and restored it to the tomb, but for the rest of her life she suffered from unrelenting toothache. The author confesses not to know why the disapproving saint allowed his tomb to be opened in the first place, but reasoned that 'since monks customarily decline the company of women, the perfect father did not wish to violate after death what he had practised in life'.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 679. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 14, pp. 679–80.

BISHOPS AND MONASTIC REFORMERS

Women were an annoyance where celibacy and clerical identity were concerned, and lay people might become downright threatening when they aspired to proprietary control, but reforming monks thundering for independence also were anxious about the claims of bishops, whose authority the Ottonians were actively supporting. According to the *Life of Deicolus*, before Baltram arrived at Lure he reputedly had established a prospering cell that caused the devil great alarm. Elaborating on the theme of dental agony, the author tells us that with every soul Baltram won it was as if the holy man were ripping out the devil's teeth! So the devil, tormented by the assault on his mandibles, decided to stir up greed and strife within the church.⁴⁶ The bishops of Strasburg and Metz had noticed with an avaricious eye the growing wealth of Baltram's place and began to argue over jurisdiction, one claiming diocesan administration, the other *subjectio loci*, the 'subjection of the place', presumably personal lordship of the site. When Baltram fell ill, the rapacious bishops rushed to his side to appropriate the property in the event of his death. To their dismay, Baltram improved. The holy man rebuked the bishops, proclaimed 'God as his heir' and, disgusted, began to give up everything 'to the poor and to clerics' with the goal of going to Rome to visit the holy sites.

Baltram's alleged decision to retreat to Rome was tactical: reformers of the tenth century often looked to Rome as a source of privileges that might protect them from lay and episcopal control. According to the *Life*, Baltram's pilgrimage echoed the activities of his illustrious predecessor who had visited Rome centuries before. The author claims that while Deicolus was in Rome, he had handed over Lure to the pope and in return received privileges of free election and protection.⁴⁷ It is possible that the story was developed out of a kernel of truth, since monks in the seventh century were known to appeal to the bishop of Rome for exemption from episcopal control.⁴⁸ Whatever the merits of the story, the hagiographer did not know much about the historical Deicolus and reflexively reproduced the events in a familiar tenth-century context. He admitted that the ancient rights won by Deicolus had been forgotten but insisted that after Baltram was invited by Count Eberhard's son Hugo and Hugo's three sons Eberhard, Hugo and Guntram to reform the monastery, they were suddenly rediscovered. Baltram sent his nephew Werdulf to evaluate the suitability of the location, 'because I am not coming alone,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, c. 15, p. 680. ⁴⁷ *Vita Sancti Deicoli*, c. 26, p. 205.

⁴⁸ See Hans H. Anton, *Studien zu den Klosterprivilegien der Päpste im frühen Mittelalter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Privilegierung von St. Maurice d'Agaune* (Berlin, 1975).

but am bringing my brothers and servants with me'.⁴⁹ Werdulf returned with a glowing assessment not only on the favourableness of the monastery, but also on its legal status. From his questioning of the locals, Werdulf learned that Lure was 'subject to Roman dominion and by highest written consent to the pope'.

ROYAL REFORM

As guardians of the church, Ottonian kings possessed by long-established precedent the right to grant privileges and extend protection to ecclesiastical institutions. Depending upon the circumstances, royal action either could reinforce lay control of monasteries or it could encourage ecclesiastical independence. During the tenth century, monastic reformers increasingly tied their protection from the Roman see to the emerging Ottonian rulers, who, as their Carolingian predecessors, took control of monasteries and saw in reform a means of clarifying their own authority.⁵⁰

According to the *Life of Deicolus*, the abbot Baltram not only had developed a fondness for papal authority before he was recruited to Lure by Count Hugo and his sons, but had already established a warm relationship with Otto I.⁵¹ An admiring Otto, it was said, was fond of visiting the holy man and had showered his hermitage with gifts. The author clearly exaggerated, because the abbot, far from being a close associate of Otto's, or even renowned for holiness from the Adriatic to Denmark, left no traces in the historical record outside documents narrowly associated with Lure. Baltram's alleged early friendship with Otto probably was interpolated to foreshadow Baltram's fateful appeal to Otto for royal protection. According to the *Life*, Baltram's Machiavellian nephew Werdulf advised that they avoid swearing allegiance to the Etichonids and appeal directly to the king for independence:

We should beware not to render fidelity to these men. Indeed that place [i.e. Lure], as all the locals admit, is subject to Roman domination and by the highest written consent to the pope. Thus, if [Hugo and his sons] are willing to give up the place in the presence of Prince Otto and restore it to pristine liberty, we shall receive it from the hand of the emperor, that is to say with such certainty, that from then on no one will be able to interfere, because the sceptre-bearing majesty proclaims [it] to remain undiminished permanently.⁵²

Baltram then dispatched Werdulf to Otto who was pleased to discover that Baltram wanted to settle down in Burgundy at Lure, which 'Hugo

⁴⁹ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 15, p. 681.

⁵⁰ Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 236–46.

⁵¹ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 15, p. 680.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 681.

and his sons had usurped and which [Baltram] asks to be delegated to him from our authority... For that place is subject to the advocacy of our Roman *imperium* and to the apostolic see.' Otto's advisors suggested that the king summon 'those men who claimed the place for themselves' and bid them swear that from then on neither 'they nor any one of their successors will presume to renew that iniquity or dare to disturb that place by strength or power'.⁵³ They also recommended that the monks have right of free election and that the king enjoin the 'apostolic bishop' so that the 'privilege be disposed with the authority of the heavenly keys'. Invoking his authority as advocate for the apostolic see of Rome, Otto granted the monks the right of free election, buttressed the privilege with the authority of St Peter in Rome, placed the monastery under the guardianship of a certain Duke Rudolf and stipulated that the sons of Hugo should be reassigned as servants of the monastery.

Otto's diploma to Lure does survive and confirms the broad outlines of the account given in the *Life*.⁵⁴ 'The legates of Abbot Baltram and his congregation at Alanesberg', the charter records, 'approached us' and asked that 'they be able to exchange it for another place'. Otto took council with his 'bishops, abbots and *fideles*' and then 'received from Hugo and Eberhard, the sons of Hugo, the place called Lure' and 'granted it to Baltram and his subjects'. The king then made a donation to Lure, placed the monastery, its property and estates 'under the protection of the Frankish kings' and recognized the *jus proprietatis*, the 'proprietary rights', of St Peter, the right to free election and freedom from episcopal control, 'with the exception of the Roman apostolic authority'.

THE SAINT AS LORDLY PATRON

Although royal and papal support were valuable in the dispute, the monks of Lure were not content to leave matters to Otto and St Peter, both of whom were too distant from local affairs to fend off the Etichonids' persisting claims. As the monks astutely recognized, the decisive issue was proprietary rights, so they were mindful to confront the family's claims head on. The author of the *Life of Deicolus* could not deny that Etichonid lords had reduced the monastery to heritable control, so he attempted to trump their claims by appeal to an older tradition. He essentially co-opted the family's arguments and constructed a superior set of inheritance claims, the divine rights of the monastery's patron Deicolus, who held the monastery as the heir of the ultimate proprietor, God.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 681–82. ⁵⁴ *D OI*, no. 199.

By the author's reckoning, neither the Etichonids nor the Ottonians had saved the monastery from Magyar raids; rather, it was rescued by the power of God working through Deicolus himself. In the centuries following its foundation, the monastery of Lure allegedly had been enriched with gifts from kings and popes, and had flourished in sacred learning. It came to pass that a 'most ferocious group of Hungarians' invaded Burgundy and sacked its churches, among them Lure,⁵⁵ but as the invaders neared Deicolus's tomb, they suddenly were stricken by the fear of God. The raiders hastily retreated from the monastery and finally fled to pillage elsewhere after attempts to torch the compound miraculously failed to ignite a single roof-tile. 'Behold', the author crowed, 'how the clemency of God fought against the senseless and saved inviolate the tomb of his servant! Then clearly it was revealed what sort of man it was [i.e. Deicolus], who deserved that place as his inheritance (*in hereditatem*) from God'. The man who did not deserve to hold the monastery was Count Eberhard, who had commandeered Lure, 'abominably claimed it as his own inheritance' and then held it for the rest of his life 'against divine law with a tyrannical hand'. The monastery passed to Eberhard's son and grandsons, and although they held 'the estate of St Deicolus for a while with impunity', the saint never 'thought to have counts as heirs of his place, but rather the monks of God'.⁵⁶

Deicolus was little pleased with this arrangement and punished those who had usurped his inheritance with horrible deaths. Lothar II, who presumptuously had given Lure to Waltrada, died during his ill-fated trip to Italy when his retinue was destroyed by a plague. So swift was his death, he was not even able to receive the viaticum. 'Doesn't everyone agree', the author mused, 'that this punishing event happened through the agency of St Deicolus?'⁵⁷ Count Eberhard, the abductor of nuns, repudiator of wives and violator of monasteries, suffered an even harsher fate. For his crimes and outrages the count died the horrible death of Herod, slowly eaten to death by worms. For good measure, the author assures his audience that Eberhard was dispossessed in the afterlife too: 'Because he bore his inheritance on earth injuriously toward St Deicolus, he was deprived of his inheritance in heaven in like measure.'

Had Eberhard's son and grandsons heeded these dreadful omens, the family might have been spared its great humiliation.⁵⁸ One evening, after Eberhard's three grandsons Eberhard, Hugo and Guntram returned from a day's work, they gathered near the tomb of Deicolus to give glory to God. Ominously, they had failed to honour His saint, Deicolus, and were

⁵⁵ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 11, p. 677. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, c. 12, p. 677.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 13, p. 679. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 12, pp. 677–8.

punished for the slight. During the night, while they performed hunting drills around the tomb, the brothers found themselves paralysed and weak, unable to move their arms, legs, hands or feet. Their father Hugo was notified and rushed 'full of tears to the spectacle of his damnation'. Overwhelmed with grief, he told his sons that their misfortune was not due to chance but to the judgement of God, 'for my father many times told me how he possessed the place, and that this was the holy place of the lord Deicolus'. Hugo now realized that God had been unable to abide 'the injury of his elect', and was punishing a later generation for the wrongs of an earlier one. He recommended they all seek penance and 'take refuge with God and his saint'. The sons agreed and pronounced themselves ready 'to hand themselves over to Saint Deicolus as servants'. They promised to reform their minds and bodies, renounce the world 'which is evil', do service and undertake the 'monastic profession'. After they confessed their errors and were restored to health, the father and his three sons 'with common vow and common consent handed themselves over to God and his saint Deicolus, not to military service, but to monastic service'. They made a pact among themselves over the tomb of Deicolus to honour the agreement and withdraw from the world entirely, 'submit by tonsure, habit and profession to the rule of the blessed father Benedict and guard the stability of the place'. Then they publicly renounced the family's claims:

They completed the pact and again and again affirmed over the tomb of the holy father with a terrible oath, that from that day on they would not desire to possess for their inheritance this place and anything which belongs to that [holy father], or anyone ever who might intend to hold [that place] on account of parental succession or possess so much as a foot by hereditary law. The agreement having been made publicly many times, they returned to their own homes with unlimited joy.⁵⁹

Hugo and his sons then sought out Baltram to become abbot of the monastery, begging him not to desert them like 'orphans'.⁶⁰ They told him of the vow they had taken but confessed that they 'had not as yet been able to find a duke (*dux*) and a father (*pater*)' for their monastery. Baltram inquired whether 'this place belongs to you', and they admitted that their forebears had invaded the place and then possessed it as their own property. They also assured him that Deicolus now held it in inheritance from God. Baltram relented to their entreaties, but demanded that they put their trust in him and resign to him 'all the ornaments of divine office'.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 12, p. 678. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 15, pp. 680–1.

THE CONTINGENCIES OF REFORM

The complex of rights and authorities brought to bear on the struggle for Lure could have produced a variety of outcomes depending upon the relative strength of those invoking them and the goals and the ambitions of the respective parties. Despite the tone of the *Life of Deicolus*, antagonism between the monks and the Etichonids was not inevitable, because the family itself, as we have just seen, initiated the reform of the monastery with the wooing of Baltram. The author of course claimed that divine intervention forced the family to act, but if we subtract this as the transparent attempt that it was to reassign agency to Deicolus, we are left with an account that points rather to the Magyar assault as the pivotal episode in the transformation of Lure.

The author initially implies that Count Eberhard took advantage of the void left by the raid to assert control over the monastery. This is impossible, because the Magyar incursion into Burgundy is known to have dated to 926, well after Eberhard's death.⁶¹ Perhaps realizing this, the author abandoned this inconsistent narrative. He returned to the subject of Eberhard's arrival at Lure and linked Eberhard's possession to the Lothar and Waltrada affair, which does at least have chronological sense. He also conceded that Eberhard had not exactly seized the monastery by force, but rather by kin right after Lothar's death (869). The details remain hidden, but Eberhard presumably traced his claims through Lothar II, who was Etichonid on his mother's side, rather than through Waltrada, to whom the count does not appear to have been related.⁶² Even here the author seems to have compressed a more complex sequence of events. Albert Bruckner dated Eberhard's possession of Lure to 860 or 870, presumably on the basis of the claim in the *Life* that Lure was given to Waltrada as part of Lothar's marriage plans, which began in 860 and came to an end with Lothar's death, after which Waltrada would have assumed control of the monastery and attracted the intervention of Eberhard. This cannot be correct. It is more likely that Waltrada retreated from public affairs only after 885, when her son Hugo, who had attempted several times to claim his father's kingdom, was blinded for conspiring against Charles the Fat.⁶³ Eberhard must have

⁶¹ Szabolcs de Vajay, *Der Eintritt des ungarischen Stammesbundes in die europäische Geschichte (862–933)* (Mainz, 1968), p. 76.

⁶² Schmid, 'Ein karolingischer Königseintrag', pp. 128–34.

⁶³ See Gerd Tellenbach, 'Die geistigen und politischen Grundlagen der karolingischen Thronfolge: Zugleich eine Studie über kollektive Willensbildung und kollektives Handeln im neunten Jahrhundert', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 13 (1979), pp. 184–302, esp. pp. 286–8; and MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 144–52.

put himself forth only then, after the downfall of Waltrada's powerful son, a supposition which finds support in his emergence in the sources first in 886 and then two years later explicitly as count.⁶⁴ Thus, the account in the *Life* is literally correct: Eberhard did take control of Lure after Lothar's death, but he did so after fifteen years had elapsed.

The Magyar attack actually occurred not long before the death of Eberhard's son Hugo, dated traditionally to 940.⁶⁵ Borgolte claims to be unable to locate the documentary basis for Hugo's death,⁶⁶ but Hugo probably died no later than that, since his father is last mentioned in the sources in 898, and Hugo's grandson, Hugo 'raucus', first emerged in 951 as count in Alsace.⁶⁷ If Hugo had helped recruit Baltram, as the *Life* asserts, the plans for renewal of the monastery must have followed closely upon the raid. This probably explains the author's clumsy handling of the Magyar episode. Had he spelled out more clearly the connection between the attack and the subsequent reform of Lure, the author would have been forced to assign a greater role to the family under whose aegis renewal was initiated. This would have subverted the aim of the enterprise, which was to deny lay agency and to downplay the family's benevolence. Because the *Life* was written within a generation of actual events, the author could not simply rewrite the story to his own satisfaction but had to anticipate his audience's own memories.⁶⁸ These constraints probably explain the awkward attempt to reinterpret the past and reassign agency to Deicolus. Was the author's portrayal of the miraculous paralysis of Hugo's three sons a creative attempt to translate the family's presumably well-known failure to protect the monastery from raiders and cast their impotence as a cataclysmic humbling at the hands of a vengeful Deicolus? The author would have his audience believe that the family was humbled because they abused Deicolus's rightful inheritance, but he himself concedes that the raid, not lay malfeasance, left Lure with 'neither monks nor clerics'. Little wonder Baltram wanted to bring all his 'monks and servants' with him to Lure. Hardly any had remained to staff the monastery.

The relations between the family and the monastery turned on the emergence of Otto I and his attempt to assert east Frankish hegemony over Lotharingia and Burgundy.⁶⁹ Crucial for mastery of these areas was control of Alsace and northeastern Burgundy. Otto first had to deal with the west Frankish king Louis IV, who resumed a pattern of activity dating

⁶⁴ Cf. Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 178; Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', p. 38.

⁶⁵ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', p. 178. ⁶⁶ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', p. 48, n. 328.

⁶⁷ Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 178–81.

⁶⁸ On the impact of audience perceptions on hagiography, see Paul Fouracre, 'Merovingian History', pp. 3–38.

⁶⁹ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 165–6.

back to his father Charles the Simple, and before that to Charles the Bald, and made a play for Lotharingia and invested Alsace. Otto drove Louis out of Alsace in 939, reasserted hegemony over Lotharingia and turned his attention to Burgundy. He rapidly established his suzerainty over the kingdom of Burgundy in 940 and set to work restructuring the Burgundian frontier where the Etichonids happened to be entrenched.⁷⁰ The Etichonid presence did not necessarily pose a problem, or at least it did not initially, and there is little reason to doubt that Otto could have cooperated with the family had he deemed them reliable or as valuable as the Burgundian lords he was cultivating. In any case, by 952 the family had fallen out of Otto's favour. The sources offer no details of the alleged crimes, but Count Guntram was accused of treason and stripped of his fiscal properties, all of which were located on either side of the upper Rhine near thoroughfares crucial for access to Italy and Burgundy.⁷¹

Otto asserted control over the foundations of Etichonid power at Lure and then, in 968, together with his son Otto II and King Conrad of Burgundy, seized control of the monastery Grandval from the Liutfrid branch of the Etichonids. According to Conrad's diploma, Grandval had been built and sustained with royal privileges but 'was conceded in benefice to a certain man named Liutfrid'. Liutfrid's son did not honour it as a royal grant, but treated it as if it were his own: he 'divided it as property among his progeny' who, 'growing numerous', allegedly 'ruined' Grandval. The unnamed son of the offending Liutfrid was summoned to appear before the three monarchs who repossessed the abbey and 'restored' the properties that the family had exploited for generations.⁷² Otto then raised up his own men in the area.⁷³ According to the *Life of Deicolus*, Otto appointed Duke Rudolf as the warden of Lure,⁷⁴ the brother (it turns out) of Otto's suffragan, Conrad of Burgundy.⁷⁵ The Etichonids were taken down a peg not because they represented an aristocratic challenge to royal authority, but because Otto felt he could press his Burgundian interests more successfully with a different set of aristocrats.

At Lure, and presumably at Grandval, Otto's task was made easier by the traditional sympathy of ecclesiastics for the strong hand of the king. The transfer of Lure from the Etichonids to Otto, however, was more complicated than the automatic trump of family rights by an irresistible combination of reform sensibilities and royal prerogatives. Initially, the

⁷⁰ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 37–46.

⁷¹ On Guntram, see Zotz, 'König Otto I, Graf Guntram und Breisach', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 137 (1989), pp. 64–77; and Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 159–67.

⁷² *Diplomata et acta regum Burgundiae Conradi*, no. 44; cf. Wilsdorf, 'Les Etichonides', pp. 27–30.

⁷³ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 50–1.

⁷⁴ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 15, p. 682. ⁷⁵ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, p. 166.

family was reconciled to Otto by the reformed monks of Lure. The *Life* concedes that Count Hugo and his three sons recruited Baltram to the monastery, an admission which would place the initial reform of Lure to sometime between 926 (the Magyar raid) and 940 (Hugo's death), i.e. well before 959, when the monks approached Otto. It also claims that Otto's councillors made provisions only for the three sons to remain as servants of the monastery, not the father. Count Hugo's participation in the initiation of reform, and his absence at the time of Otto's intervention, suggests that the hagiographer had compressed a lengthier transitional phase from family to royal control. Otto's diploma to Lure in 959 makes no mention of Count Hugo and claims that Baltram had moved to Lure at Otto's behest. This appears to contradict the longer chronology inferred from the *Life of Deicolus*, but we should treat with scepticism the image of royal agency promoted by official documents. On close inspection, the diploma only approved a relocation which already had occurred, since, taken literally, it refers to the monks as those 'who were living at Alanesberg' (past tense).

Baltram's appearance before Otto probably was undertaken to protect, rather than to undermine, the family. According to the royal diploma, Otto received Lure from only two of Hugo's three sons, Hugo and Eberhard, on 6 April 959, just eight days before Otto granted properties confiscated from the third brother Guntram to Duke Rudolf, the new warden of Lure.⁷⁶ When we consider his problems with Otto, Guntram's absence is hardly surprising. However, it is surprising that the author of the *Life of Deicolus* did not seize on Guntram's disgrace to reinforce his polemic against the family. He implicated all three brothers in the plan to hand over the monastery to Otto and passed over Guntram's disgrace in silence.⁷⁷ The author preferred to assign agency both to Deicolus, whose wrath – not Otto's – humbled the family, and to Baltram and Werdulf, who allegedly had concocted the ingenious plan to outflank the brothers and win the monastery's independence. It is more likely that the family's vulnerable position triggered the series of events that brought Baltram, Hugo and Eberhard before Otto. Guntram's fall from grace, his absence from the transfer of the monastery before Otto and the timing of the transaction suggest that Eberhard and Hugo had distanced themselves from their disgraced third brother, at least for appearances' sake in front of Otto, in an effort to salvage a measure of control over Lure. Far from being outwitted by clever reformers, as the *Life of Deicolus* asserts, Eberhard and Hugo evidently had sized up the family's perilous situation

⁷⁶ *D OI*, no. 201. ⁷⁷ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 15, p. 681.

and made arrangements among themselves with Baltram that the abbot should request royal protection and see to it that the two brothers remained as protectors of the monastery. The author admits as much when he concedes that Werdulf advised his uncle Baltram to petition for royal protection 'if they are willing to give up the place in the presence of Prince Otto'.⁷⁸ Thus initially, the transfer of the monastery away from family control was marked by the clash of Etichonid and Ottonian imperatives, which were accommodated to one another by their respective confluence with monastic reform.

By the time the *Life of Deicolus* was composed the monks had become decidedly hostile toward the family. The *Life* was written in the last quarter of the tenth century by a monk under the supervision of Werdulf, who had succeeded his uncle Baltram in 960.⁷⁹ While Otto lived, Werdulf had enjoyed a degree of control over the monastery's affairs hitherto unknown, a period of freedom that fundamentally altered the relationship between the Etichonids and Lure. Not surprisingly, the author scorned the era of lay control and jealously defended the monastery's hard-won independence. It is clear from the author's agitated concern with rightful inheritance that Werdulf must have been wrestling with a new generation of claimants. Indeed, Eberhard, the great-great-grandson of the Count Eberhard who had first possessed Lure, attempted to re-assert family control in 1016, only to be foiled by Emperor Henry II.⁸⁰ Werdulf's problem was that his adversaries were well aware that the family had held Lure as heritable property not long before and had initiated Baltram's reforms. He also had to deal with the absence of a strong protector. By 975, Otto had died (973), as most likely had the two brothers, Hugo and Eberhard, who had renounced their claims before the king.⁸¹ Otto II (973–83) was a frequent presence in Alsace, but his 3-year-old heir, Otto III (983–1002), would have been too young and in any case was too infrequent a visitor to deter Lure's adversaries. By contrast with Otto II, who visited Alsace twice during his relatively brief reign, in 975 and 977, Otto III visited but once, as a 13-year-old in 993/4.⁸²

It stands as testimony to the power of tradition and the strength of family rights that grants from a strong ruler, while clearly valuable in a dispute, could not by themselves ensure a monastery's freedom. The author of the *Life of Deicolus* needed to manufacture an older tradition

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Waitz, *Ex Vita Deicoli*, p. 674; cf. Heinz Thomas, 'Der Mönch Theoderich von Trier und die Vita Deicoli', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 31 (1966/7), pp. 42–63, esp. p. 49.

⁸⁰ *Diplomata Heinrici II*, ed. H. Bresslau, H. Bloch and R. Holzmann, *MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae* 3: *Diplomata Heinrici II. et Arduini* (Hanover, 1900–3), no. 348.

⁸¹ Cf. Vollmer, 'Die Etichonen', pp. 178–81. ⁸² Cf. Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 175–82.

that would counter all other claims and be enforced by the power of an ever-watchful protector, the vengeful heir of God, Deicolus. Deicolus embodied Lure's claims to independence in the absence of Otto, who was no longer around to guarantee them, and the pope, who was too weak and far away. It was God and His heir Deicolus, not Otto, who had controlled events all along and had forced the family to renounce its rights; and it was Abbot Baltram, not the new warden, Duke Rudolph, who was the proper '*dux*' of Lure.⁸³ To buttress these claims, the *Life* contains a good deal of retrospective interpretation and outright interpolation to subvert opposing views of the past. On the one hand, the family could not legally have held the monastery because earlier claimants had wrongfully possessed it and had otherwise been bad people. On the other hand, the author planted in the past a series of precedents which served to undermine the family's claims. Deicolus himself had supposedly given the monastery to the church of Rome in the seventh century; and closer to the author's own day, Count Hugo and his sons allegedly had renounced their rights of inheritance over the saint's tomb, recognized Deicolus as heir of the monastery and had sworn subservience to the saint, the monastery and Baltram. The author admitted that Baltram was summoned by Hugo and his sons but maintained that the venerable abbot had already possessed a fondness for Rome and a warm friendship with Otto. It should not surprise us, then, that it was Werdulf himself, the arbiter of the past served up in the *Life*, who 'discovered' that the monastery was once subject to Roman authority and who purportedly devised the plan to approach Otto and avoid rendering fidelity to Hugo and his sons.

The monastery still did not wish to sever relations; it merely wished to assert dominance in monastic affairs. Despite the shrill concern with Etichonid claims, the author sought to integrate the family into a monastic lordship. Itinerant kings, even strong ones, could not provide regular, on-the-spot protection. For that, the monastery needed the friendship of the locally powerful. For all of the invective directed at Waltrada, Lothar and Eberhard, the *Life* is well disposed toward Hugo and his sons, who are cast as penitent, cooperative servants of the monastery. The author was not merely content to subvert the family's claims; he also wanted to create a positive situation by reconfiguring the monastic family. He constructed a new heir and lord for the monastery, Deicolus, to whom Count Hugo and his sons willingly pledged their service; and a new family around the 'holy father' Deicolus and Abbot Baltram who, according to the author, took in these poor 'orphans' and agreed to become the *pater*, the father, of Lure.⁸⁴

⁸³ *Ex Vita Deicoli*, c. 15, p. 680. ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF LAY LORDSHIP

The revision of authority at Lure encapsulates the processes by which family interests, royal ambition, and religious and institutional reform interacted to restructure the balance of power. Throughout the early middle ages, families such as the Etichonids perpetuated their dominance through religious foundations; and early medieval kings disseminated their authority through the same institutions. This formula was fundamentally altered in the tenth century, when religious reformers redefined their relationship to the 'world'. They wanted to create an autonomous space by appeal to a distant papal authority, on the one hand, and to the very local spiritual power of a patron saint, on the other. Monastic institutions still needed lay support, but the relationship had been subtly and profoundly rearranged: aristocratic protection was necessary, but it was now subordinated to other authorities; in the process, kin-groups such as the Etichonids, a family whose identity had long been bound up with institutions such as Lure and Grandval, lost the props to their self-consciousness and continuity.⁸⁵ Within a few generations, the Etichonids would cease to exist.

The Etichonids did resurrect their immediate fortunes under Otto II and Otto III, who raised up several individuals of the Eberhard and Liutfrid branches of the family as counts in northern and southern Alsace.⁸⁶ Despite the acquisition of the comital office, the Liutfrid branch – deprived of Grandval forever when that ancient bastion of Etichonid lordship was transferred to the bishop of Basle in 999 – vanished from history shortly after 1000.⁸⁷ The Eberhard branch essentially passed away too, at least as Etichonids (see table 7). Similar to the Liutfrids, they lost control of the monastic institutions with which they had been closely associated; but unlike the Liutfrids, they rapidly reconstituted themselves as a new family and continued into the thirteenth century.⁸⁸ After the loss of their traditional monasteries, two of the three brothers, Eberhard and Guntram, Eberhard's son Hugo 'raucus', and Hugo raucus's four sons, Hugo, Eberhard, Gerhard and Matfrid, established a new foundation at Altdorf. Hugo raucus's son and daughter-in-law, Hugo and Heilwig, founded two more monasteries, one at Woffenheim in central Alsace and another at Hesse in the Saargau just west of the Saverne Gap. Altdorf

⁸⁵ Hummer, 'Reform and Lordship', pp. 79–83.

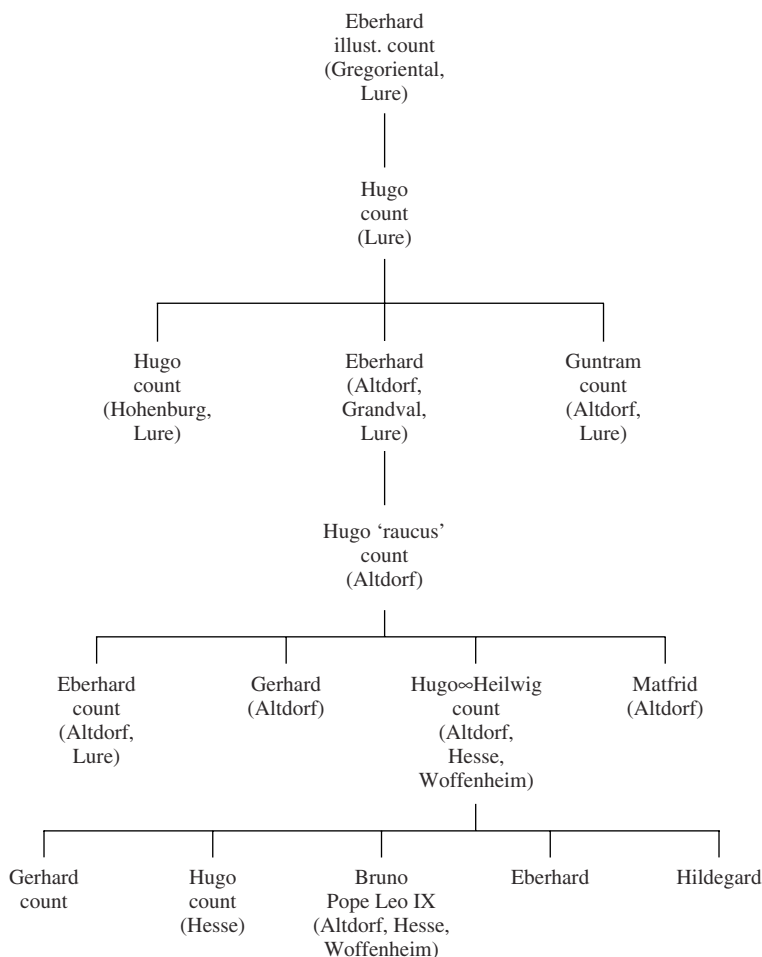
⁸⁶ Borgolte, 'Geschichte der Grafengewalt', pp. 51–2.

⁸⁷ Hummer, 'Reform and Lordship', pp. 82–3.

⁸⁸ See Frank Legl, *Studien zur Geschichte der Grafen von Dagsburg-Eguisheim*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung 31 (Saarbrücken, 1998).

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Table 7. *The later Etichonids II: the Eberhards/Lords of Dabo and Eguisheim, and associated monasteries*



was reformed along Cluniac lines from the start;⁸⁹ the other two, set up initially as traditional proprietary abbeys, soon were reformed along Roman lines when Hugo and Heilwig's son Bruno, in his capacity as Pope Leo IX, transferred them from his own family's right of inheritance to the 'right of legal succession of the apostolic seat'.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Büttner, *Geschichte des Elsaß*, pp. 173–4.

⁹⁰ Hummer, 'Reform and Lordship', pp. 80–1.

The tenth-century transformation

This shift from proprietary to reformed abbey marked a shift in the institutional basis of the family's power. By contrast with the Etichonids of the early tenth century, their descendants of the late tenth and early eleventh century no longer lived in strategically located (monastic) residences. The new foundations, even those at Woffenheim and Hesse, were devoted more exclusively to religious life from the start, having been established not in defensible locations but rather in the unprotected lowlands. These monastic operations now remained separate and distinct from the family's newly established mountain fortresses. At about the same time that Altdorf was founded, and before Hugo had established monasteries at Woffenheim and Hesse, the family erected fortresses high in the Vosges. These castles at Eguisheim near Colmar and at Dabo near the Saverne Gap became the new foci of family identity. The reformed cloisters continued to be important to the family's prestige, but the family's relationship to these monasteries was expressed not by right of inheritance but through the office of advocate, which belonged by hereditary right to the eldest son in the possession of the fortress at Eguisheim.⁹¹ That is, the advocacies were subordinated to a family identity now centred on the castle, a change in self-perception which was complete by the late eleventh century when the lords of the family became widely known as the Counts of Dabo and Eguisheim.⁹² If the loss of Lure and other traditional monasteries marked the beginning of the end of Etichonid lordship, a lordship which had been based on a fusion of lordly and monastic interests, the castles and reformed advocacies that subsequently emerged represented the beginning of a new family identity which was defined more strictly as secular and military.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 81–2. On the connection between the emergence of dynastic families and reformed monasteries in general, see Schmid, 'Adel und Reform'.

⁹² Hummer, 'Reform and Lordship', p. 83.

CONCLUSIONS

The political order of early medieval Alsace took shape in the seventh century with the emergence of monastery-based lordships and was transformed around the millennium, when monastic reformers began to insist, ultimately successfully, on ecclesiastical autonomy from lay control. When Pope Leo IX returned to Alsace in 1049 to bless altars, distribute relics and confirm the rights of reformed cloisters, he encountered – indeed he had himself grown up in – a world in which the relationship between monasteries and patrons was viewed fundamentally differently: whereas the identity of the lords of Dabo and Eguisheim was anchored to castles and to the advocacies of reformed monasteries, the consciousness of Leo's more distant Etichonid ancestors had been rooted in the monism of early medieval proprietary monasticism. As the institutional consciousness of early medieval monasteries was transformed by the pressure of reform, so too was the equation of lordly power and, by extension, Leo's memory of his own family's past.

In the early middle ages, the flexibility of, as well as the tension in, the networks of kings, patron families and monasteries ensured that the dominant order that emerged in seventh-century Alsace would be at once remarkably resilient and adaptable. The late Merovingian order was not a homeostatic balance of interests disrupted by a Carolingian coup, as some have argued,¹ but rather a dynamic system which profoundly reordered the political landscape. The final disintegration of late antique administrative and fiscal institutions in the seventh century meant that power, whether it was familial, ecclesiastical or royal, economic or political, had to be cultivated through local institutions of property-holding. Whether the changes ushered in during the seventh century required a new dynasty is of course debatable, but whatever the

¹ Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, pp. 12–32; Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 1–26, 79–87.

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outcome might have been, it is doubtful that the Merovingian kingship, as it had come to be configured by the late seventh century, could have sustained itself in the face of this new formulation of power without substantial reform. The recent emphasis on Carolingian-era denigrations of Merovingian achievements, and the accompanying defensiveness for the Merovingian period, has obscured the more obvious consequence of processes set into motion during the seventh century: the Carolingian order itself. From this perspective, the events of 751 merely brought the most conservative of political institutions, the kingship, into line with the changing sentiments of the wider Frankish aristocracy.

The extension of the Carolingians' authority in Alsace was predicated on the possibilities inherent in monastery-based lordship. With grants of immunity and protection, Carolingian rulers systematically co-opted ecclesiastical institutions and turned them into conduits for central rule. Moreover, through the patronage of monasteries they were able to connect themselves to local and regional networks and to tap reserves of monastic property. The principal mechanism for this was the flexible precarial transfer which was adapted to royal purposes in the form of the *precaria verbo regis*. If the exercise of central authority was shaped by the configuration of local power, it is also the case that the local order was altered by the assertion of royal authority. As obligations and burdens devolved upon monasteries in exchange for privileges, there emerged a clearer hierarchy between patron families and property-granting institutions. Whereas the relationships between kin-groups and monasteries at first had been horizontal, in that patrons rarely paid a *census* for the use of precarial property, in the late eighth century a more vertical arrangement appeared as precarial grants suddenly were burdened with annual rents.

In a sense, the precarial *census* functioned as an indirect tax, in that they proliferated at the same time that monasteries were burdened with royal initiatives. It would strain the evidence to see in the precarial *census* the survival or the resuscitation of a late Roman system of governance or taxation.² The indiscriminate precarial *census* developed out of a restricted set of local circumstances, rather than Roman administrative

² On the case for the persistence of Roman administration into the late Carolingian period, see Jean Durliat, *Les finances publiques de Diodétien aux Carolingiens (284–888)*, Beihefte der *Francia* 21 (Sigmaringen, 1990); and Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier, 'La gestion publique en Neustrie: Les moyens et les hommes (VII^e–IX^e siècles)', in Hartmut Atsma ed., *La Neustrie: Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, 2 vols., Beihefte der *Francia* 16 (Sigmaringen, 1989), vol. I, pp. 271–320. For criticisms of the argument, see in particular Chris Wickham, 'The Fall of Rome Will Not Take Place', in Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein eds., *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings* (Malden, Mass., 1998), pp. 45–57.

precedents, and it was levied not on tax-evading donors³ but on landowners who received usufructuary rights to ecclesiastical property. Although it technically was a rent rather than a tax, the scope and frequency of the assessment changed at a critical moment in Carolingian rule. That churches began to standardize days for collection and to express rents in flexible monetary units in the late eighth century, and that Charlemagne himself supported ecclesiastical efforts to assess and collect rents at the same time that he was integrating monasteries into the framework of empire and burdening them ever more with administrative and pastoral responsibilities, suggest that the precarial *census* was expanded and formalized to finance the demands that emanated from the political centre.

If the ability to leave an imprint on local affairs is an indicator of the potency of royal power, then this study of Alsace confirms from a different perspective the studies by Matthew Innes for the mid-Rhine and Warren Brown for Bavaria. All three studies show that, in spite of efforts to downplay the uniqueness of Charlemagne's rule, royal power was felt most emphatically in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.⁴ Charlemagne's reputation was not an illusion manufactured by clever writers or the result of a few attention-grabbing and over-hyped conquests.⁵ As the careful analysis of local evidence is showing, it was hard earned.

Charlemagne's accomplishments should be used neither as a benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of his successors nor to impugn his achievement as ephemeral or even as a failure. The farther-reaching lesson is the resilience and adaptability of the underlying order, an order which Pippin and Charlemagne deftly harmonized with royal aims and which their successors continued to mould in ingenious ways. On the one hand, the transition from a unified empire to regional kingdoms was as wrenching as Carolingian writers such as Nithard described, precisely because the frequent partitions inevitably frayed the social and political fabric of regions suddenly reconstituted as border territories, and left many bereft of lordships. On the other hand, the sharpened administrative consciousness of monasteries and the expanded circle of families that had become attached to ecclesiastical institutions presented new possibilities for mobilizing and consolidating blocs of support. The ability of Carolingian dynasts to master the highly developed networks of kin-groups and ecclesiastical institutions and

³ Durlat, *Les finances publiques*, pp. 144–9.

⁴ Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 180–8; Brown, *Unjust Seizure*, pp. 73–123.

⁵ See for example, Fichtenau, *Carolingian Empire*; and more recently Collins, *Charlemagne*.

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bring them under their authority ensured a relatively orderly reconso-
lidation of power. By these means, Louis the Pious's successors helped
to shape both the boundaries and the distinctive cultures of the ensuing
regional kingdoms and ultimately the succeeding post-Carolingian
realms.

Louis the German, in particular, emerged as a remarkably creative
ruler, having adapted the traditional proprietary and pastoral responsibil-
ities of monasteries to the task of creating his unprecedented east Frankish
kingdom. Louis's inventiveness in these pages augments the acceptance in
recent Carolingian scholarship of the vigour and creativity of Charles the
Bald and the west Frankish kingdom,⁶ and may be added to several recent
studies which are attempting to re-evaluate the enigmatic east Frankish
king.⁷ The greater attention devoted to Louis's counterpart springs in part
from the wealth of documentation and art created by Charles's propa-
gandists and the disproportionate survival of royal sources from west
Francia. The relative lack of narrative and diplomatic sources for the
east Frankish regions has made Louis the German a much more difficult
figure to evaluate, at least in the terms traditionally used to assess rulers.⁸
While Louis's reign may be under-reported by narrative and diplomatic
evidence, we do possess written sources unique to east Francia and
traceable to royal circles: vernacular literature and cartularies. The analysis
of the Alsatian evidence presented here illuminates some of the ways that
the choices, decisions and programmes undertaken in the east Frankish
kingdom contributed to the future divisions of Europe.

Although the power struggles that ensued upon the death of Louis the
Pious shattered the imperial unity achieved by Charlemagne and Louis
the Pious, it would be erroneous to confuse the fragmentation of the
empire with the weakening of political order or to see a return to a pre-
Carolingian status quo as the ninth century wore on. The late Carolingian
period witnessed a marked decline in royal power, and it would be
fruitless to insist otherwise; but, by contrast with the late Merovingian
period, when an active royal presence was missing in Alsace, late
Carolingian and Ottonian Alsace remained open to direct royal super-
vision. Despite, or more likely because of, the enduring presence of kings,

⁶ See the influential work of Karl Ferdinand Werner, *Vom Frankenreich zur Entfaltung Deutschlands und Frankreichs: Ursprünge, Strukturen, Beziehungen: Ausgewählte Beiträge: Festgabe zu seinem sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1984); *Histoire de France* vol. I: *Les origines avant l'an mil* (Paris, 1984), pp. 397–430; as well as Nelson, *Charles the Bald*; McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 169–99; and Riché, *The Carolingians*, pp. 197–205.

⁷ See Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche*; Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche*; as well as Eric Goldberg's forth-
coming book, *Struggle for Empire*.

⁸ Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 9–10.

whose favour simultaneously had stimulated the growth of monastic concerns and had augmented the dominance of long-entrenched families, lordship in Alsace changed markedly. In contrast both to the late Merovingian period, when kin-groups and monasteries had elaborated symbiotic relationships, and to the high Carolingian period, when monks attempted to clarify a hierarchy that subordinated patron rights to those of the monastery, in the late Carolingian period long-established patron families subordinated monasteries to family control and passed them on by right of inheritance. The conspicuous emergence of agnatic lineages in the tenth century,⁹ evident among the late Carolingian branches of the Etichonids, flowed logically from direct family dominance of property-holding institutions.

The fate of the late Carolingian order traditionally has been bound up with debates over the feudal transformation of Europe in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. As is well known, the pioneering work on these matters was done in France by Marc Bloch and Georges Duby, both of whom were preoccupied with the birth of 'feudal society' (and implicitly the social order of pre-Revolutionary France).¹⁰ These two giants in medieval historiography located the origins of this society between 950, when the remnants of the Carolingian order allegedly collapsed, and 1050, when a new class of territorial lords, the castellans, fully emerged. In Germany, Karl Schmid and the Freiburg circle of researchers arrived independently at similar conclusions from another context and by close prosopographical analysis of the changes in the aristocracy between the ninth and the twelfth centuries. Schmid famously argued that the 'consciousness' and structure of the aristocracy had been profoundly transformed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: whereas early medieval kin-groups had taken the form of broad, bilateral, cognatic groups, the families of the high middle ages organized themselves into patrilineages which were set off by identifying symbols and names, were closely associated with reformed cloisters and were firmly anchored to family castles.¹¹

⁹ Cf. Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 135–43, 414–27.

¹⁰ Bloch, *Feudal Society*; and Duby, *La société*.

¹¹ See Karl Schmid, 'Zur Problematic von Familie, Sippe und Geschlecht, Haus und Dynastie beim mittelalterlichen Adel: Vorfragen zum Thema, "Adel und Herrschaft im Mittelalter"', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 105 (1957), pp. 1–62; 'The Structure of the Nobility in the Early Middle Ages', in Reuter ed., *The Medieval Nobility*, pp. 37–59; and finally Schmid's masterful study of the Welfs, 'Welfisches Selbstverständnis', in Schmid, *Gebetsgedenken*, pp. 424–53. The font of much of this work was Schmid's posthumously published *Habilitationsschrift*, entitled *Gebliit, Herrschaft, Geschlechterbewusstsein: Grundfragen zum Verständnis des Adels im Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Mertens and Thomas Zotz, Vorträge und Forschungen 44 (Sigmaringen, 1998).

Conclusions

This paradigm of transformation has attracted supporters¹² and critics. Among the latter, some have pointed to continuities in the practice of lordship during the tenth and the eleventh centuries;¹³ some have conceded change, but questioned its geographical scope;¹⁴ and others have pointed to profound methodological or conceptual issues.¹⁵ Still others have pointed to the problem of establishing a suitable baseline for assessing change and have argued that proponents of transformation have erroneously assumed an imposing Carolingian administrative order, the collapse of which is believed to have triggered lawlessness and violence. While there is some justification for this view in that the receding of royal power from some areas was bound to have consequences for lordship,¹⁶ it nonetheless overestimates the formality of Carolingian political structures and underestimates the elements of later medieval lordship already emergent in the ninth century.¹⁷ In the east Frankish regions, where the so-called stem-duchies appeared in the tenth century, changes in lordship were due less to a crisis of Carolingian order than to long-term processes that had been unfolding since the eighth century. Innes's subtle analysis of

¹² In addition to the works by Duby, Poly, Bournazel, Bonnassie and Fossier cited in the introduction, p. 6, n. 11 and p. 8, n. 17, see also those by Guy Bois, *The Transformation of the Year One Thousand: The Village of Lourmand from Antiquity to Feudalism*, trans. J. Birrell (Manchester, 1992); Thomas N. Bisson, 'The "Feudal Revolution"', *Past and Present* 142 (1994), pp. 6–42; and David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), pp. 79–92. On the reception of Schmid's ideas in general, see Mertens and Zotz's introduction to Schmid's *Gebliut, Herrschaft, Geschlechterbewusstsein*, pp. xviii–xxviii. For applications of Schmid's thesis, see Andrew W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State*, Harvard Historical Studies 100 (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); and John B. Freed, *The Counts of Falkenstein: Noble Self-Consciousness in Twelfth-Century Germany*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 74, 6 (Philadelphia, 1984).

¹³ See the separate discussions by Dominique Barthélemy ('Comment 1') and Stephen D. White ('Comment 2'), 'Debate: The "Feudal Revolution"', *Past and Present* 152 (1996), pp. 196–205 and 205–23, respectively. See also Dominique Barthélemy, 'La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu? (Note critique)', *Annales E. S. C.* 48 (1992), pp. 767–77; and Constance Bouchard, 'Family Structure and Family Consciousness among the Aristocracy in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries', *Francia* 14 (1986), pp. 639–58; and 'The Origins of the French Nobility: A Reassessment', *American Historical Review* 86 (1981), pp. 501–32; both of which have been reproduced with slight revision in Constance Bouchard, *Those of My Blood': Constructing Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia, 2001), see esp. pp. 15–16, 59–60 and 68–73.

¹⁴ See the separate discussions by Timothy Reuter ('Comment 3') and Chris Wickham ('Comment 4'), 'Debate: The "Feudal Revolution"', *Past and Present* 155 (1997), pp. 177–95, esp. pp. 187–95, and pp. 196–208, esp. pp. 199–200, respectively; and Dominique Barthélemy, *La société dans le comté de Vendôme de l'an mil au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1993), pp. 653–80. See also the criticisms of Karl Bosl, Friedrich Prinz and Wilhelm Störmer, which are concisely summarized in Freed, *The Counts of Falkenstein*, pp. 6–9.

¹⁵ See for example, Stephen D. White, 'Tenth-Century Courts at Mâcon and the Perils of Structuralist History: Re-reading Burgundian Judicial Institutions', in Brown and Górecki, *Conflict in Medieval Europe*, pp. 37–68; and Karl Leyser, 'The German Aristocracy from the Ninth to the Early Twelfth Century: A Historical and Cultural Sketch', *Past and Present* 41 (1968), pp. 25–53, esp. pp. 31–7, 48–53.

¹⁶ Wickham, 'Debate', pp. 200–8. ¹⁷ White, *ibid.*, pp. 219–22; and Reuter, *ibid.*, pp. 181–5.

the mid-Rhine region has shown that the interplay of royal and aristocratic power ultimately strengthened regional aristocracies and empowered the counts and dukes who came to mediate the space between locality and centre in the Ottonian period.¹⁸

In some respects, the evidence from Alsace provides ballast to some criticisms of radical transformation. Alsace, like most of east Francia, was not beset by increasing political chaos as the Carolingian dynasty petered out. East Francia was quickly reconstituted under Ottonian authority because the new dynasty was able to build upon a coherent local and regional order. In Alsace, which lacked a well-developed intermediate level of ducal authority partly because royal authority had remained a near continuous presence, Otto I was able to shape local affairs after a manner that recalled Charlemagne himself. In addition, if the behaviour of the late Carolingian Etichonids is representative, agnatic practices were pronounced well before the late tenth century. Having subordinated monasteries to family control, branches of the later Etichonids handed them down by right of inheritance from father to son for several generations. In this sense, the passing down of reformed advocacies in the early eleventh century through male succession was merely an adaptation of an earlier practice; and the continuing importance of reformed cloisters to family lordships in the eleventh century speaks of the enduring relevance of monasteries for lordship in the high medieval period.

In other respects, this study comes down firmly on the side of fundamental change, although for reasons that differ from those usually offered by proponents of transformation. Overlooked in the efforts either to seize on Schmid's or Duby's theses as an explanation for profound social change or to limit Schmid's and Duby's conclusions to the regions they examined are the strikingly similar developments that both scholars identified despite the vast differences in the political situation in Duby's Mâcon, where royal authority was virtually non-existent, and Schmid's Swabia, where it remained relevant. While the growth of an intermediate level of ducal authority in Swabia and the increasing inability of Ottonian kings to interact directly with localities there could be seen as analogous to Mâcon, this does not explain Alsace, where many of the processes identified by Schmid or Duby – the appearance of castles, an explicitly expressed patrilineal consciousness and reformed cloisters – emerged in the presence of a strong and active royal authority.

Common to all three regions was the advent of radical monastic reform which profoundly challenged the compact of monastic and family rights

¹⁸ Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 222–50.

that had animated lordships since the seventh century. At no time during the early medieval period did monasteries level such vehement criticisms of lay involvement and insist on *de jure* self-control. In Alsace, as reform-minded monks insisted on complete independence, free election of the abbot, and subjection to Rome and to the protection of the emperor, families were forced to redefine themselves. In some cases the consequences were dire: families pushed out of the monasteries that had sustained their dominance simply disappeared. Others nimbly adapted. Marginalized from monastic life, they developed new institutions on their own property dedicated exclusively to their memory: fortresses. Families now adopted the place names of their castles as monikers, e.g. the count 'possessing the fortress Eguisheim', or more simply the count of Eguisheim. These castles were not stimulated by the collapse of royal authority; they were established by families who were attempting to carve out a basis of power for themselves in the face of an aggressive monasticism and, in the German Empire, an assertive kingship. This process explains the depiction for the first time in medieval Alsace of autonomously constituted kin-groups.

Families continued to endow monasteries, but these new foundations were organized as reformed abbeys whose right to internal self-governance was recognized by their lordly patrons. While a family might maintain a measure of influence over their foundations through the office of advocate, it would be a mistake to see in this arrangement a mere legal fiction masking the continuation of earlier practices. Too much had changed. The advocacy was held by the eldest male, whose dominance within the family was defined by his possession of the castle to which that advocacy was attached as an appurtenance. No longer do we hear of Alsatian families treating monasteries as seats of lordship and using them as *de facto* fortresses. In contrast to the early tenth century, when families considered themselves responsible for both the defence of the monastery and its spiritual welfare, under the pressure of reform in the late tenth century the roles of the monks and their powerful patrons were sharply differentiated. The monks gained exclusive control of spiritual affairs through self-governance, and the family's role was restricted to the military sphere as protectors. It was the castle, and its elemental military and male function, that was responsible for the explicit representation of patrilineal consciousness in the eleventh-century sources.

In the early medieval period the acquisition of family power, and the family patterns that are believed to focus or diffuse that power, cannot be treated as autonomous processes, separate and distinct from the fate of ecclesiastical institutions: not because kinship remained important in the

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presence of institutions, nor simply because families manipulated institutions to their strategic advantage, but because institutional mechanisms regulated long-term patterns in kinship and power. Medieval historians, whether they have felt compelled to support or criticize a transformation around the millennium, have been slow to make ecclesiastical institutions and monastic reform central to the problematic of social and political change. A comparison of Duby's Mâconnais, Schmid's Swabia and early medieval Alsace reveals that the common denominator between the three areas was not a vacuum of public authority, but the presence of radical, monastic reform. As the consciousness of the institutions responsible for the continuity of the early medieval aristocracy was redefined, so too was the dynamic of politics and power in medieval Europe.

APPENDIX: RECORDS OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN RODOIN AND GEBAHART AND THE MONASTERY OF WEISSENBURG

A. TRADITIONES WIZENBURGENSES NO. 197, 31 JANUARY 788

Precaria Rodoini et Gebagartdi fratris sui.

Domino sancto et in Christo uenerabili Ermberto episcopo uel abbate, ego Rodoinus et Gebagardus frater meus, filii Eburhardi. Dum petitionem fecimus de illa re quod Lan[t]fridus frater noster habuit et nos cum illo, sine nutu a[t]que uoluntate uestra, et multum contrarium fuit uobis quod sic habuimus illas res. Tunc nempe fuit nobis compunctio cordis atque magnus meror *uel* tristitia, quod sic habemus illas *nenias uel* res sine uoluntate uestra. Postea quoque uenimus ad Ermbertum episcopum et reddimus illas res per uuadio nostro illo vestro episcopo atque uobis seruis dei, quia nullus hominum sine *precepto* uestro atque uoluntate potuit habere illas res quod antecessores nostri atque patres tradiderunt spontanea uoluntate ad monasterio Uuizenburgo cum firmis testibus. Post quoque hobitum fratris nostri Lantfridi petitio nostra fuit ad Ermberto episcopo *uel* abbate uestro atque ad uobis seruis dei, qui deo seruietis in *monasterio* Uuizenburgo, de illa re q[uo]d contra uos habuit Lantfridus et nos cum illo. Tunc adsteterunt nobis boni homines in auxi[li]o atque in opitulatione, et uobis conplacuit atque pietas tetigit, ut nobis aliquam portionem *prestaretis* de illa re quod super[i]us diximus. Ita et fecistis propter pietatem uestram, quia multum necessarium fuit nobis. Nunc uero in istis locis quod nominauimus *prestaretis* nobis quicquid inter Achilla et Mittilibrunnen et Ludolfespedu et Uuassensteine, inter illos terminos nisi tertiam partem siluole et Balgerium cum filio suo *uel* quicquid de res suas et cum omni possessione sua quod ad illum aspicit atque pertinet, hoc foris exposuistis. Et ut u[est]ri homines atque serui quicquid operare uel edificare *uel* porcos crassare uoluerint, hoc habeant potestatem per omnia. Et nobis censum *prestaretis* propter pietatem uestram, quod alii homines donare debeant, non autem uestri homines. Nunc autem alias res, in domibus in edificiis in mansis in pascuis et in mancipiis.

[After one and a half lines of empty space begins the pretrial portion:]

Similiter p[r]estauimus uobis propter petitionem uestram [in uillare] quod dicitur Berg, ut faciatis unum angrum de Aganbach usque ad *monasterio* Uuizenburgo *uel* XX denarios donare debeatis meros, ipsas res quod uos per uuadio uestro ad *monasterio* Uuizenburgo reddidistis. Et postea uestra fuit petitio et nostra beneuolentia

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quod ipsas res prestamus uobis, propter quod foris exposuimus in superiori loco, in ea uero ratione ut su[b] usu fructuario excolere debeatis diebus uite uestre, et quicquid meliorare aut laborare potueritis, hoc faceritis. Et ut per annos singulos censum studere debeatis ad festiuitatem sancti Martini V solidos [dare] ad monasterio Uuizenburgo. Post quoque discussu uestro cum omni integritate ad nos reuertant vel ad successores nostros sine ullius iudicis interpellatione.

Facta precaria sub die pridie kalendas februarii anno XX regnante Karolo rege nostro.

Testes: [signum] Ermberti qui hanc precariam fieri precepit. signum Gerberti decani. Uurmharrii. Uualdrihi. Hruothardi. Ermingi. Helphandi.

Ego Hildiboto scripsi

Translation: The precaria of Rodoin and his brother Gebahart To the holy lord bishop and abbot in Christ, the venerable Ermbert, I Rodoin and Gebahart my brother, the sons of Eburhard. While we made a petition for that property which our brother Lantfrid held – and we with him – without your assent and will, there was a great argument with you because we held those properties. Then truly we felt remorse, as well as great grief and sadness, because we held those properties in excess and without your consent. Afterwards we came to bishop Ermbert and returned the properties through our pledge to that man your bishop and also to you servants of God, since no one was able to have, without your bidding and consent, those properties which our ancestors and fathers handed over by free will to the monastery Weissenburg with valid witnesses. After the death of our brother Lantfrid we made a petition to your bishop and abbot Ermbert and to you servants of God, who are devoted to God in the monastery Weissenburg, for that property which Lantfrid held against you, and we with him. At that time the good men stood with us in support and assistance, and it was pleasing to you and compassion moved [you], that you grant to us some portion of that property which we mentioned above. Thus you did on account of your compassion, since our need was great. Indeed now you grant to us in those locations which we have named whatever is between the Eichel, the Mittelbrunn, Ludolfesteich and Spitzstein, between those boundaries except for the third portion of forest and Baldger with his son or whatever of his properties and with all his possession which belongs and pertains to that man, this you set aside. So that your men and servants, whatever they might wish to work or build or [whoever might wish] to graze pigs, this let them have the power [to do] in every way. And to us because of your piety you shall grant a *census* – which all men ought to give, but not your men – as well as the other properties, in houses, buildings, *manses*, meadows, pastures, and labourers.

[After one and a half lines of empty space begins the pretrial portion:]

Likewise, on account of your petition we granted to you [in the *villare*] which is called Berg, [on the condition] that you make a transport from Waldhambach to the monastery Weissenburg or pay twenty genuine *denarii*, those properties which you returned by your pledge to the monastery Weissenburg. After that there was your petition and our benevolence that we grant those properties to you, next to that which we set aside in the place above, on the condition that you ought to cultivate [them] under usufruct for the days of your life, and whatever you are be able to augment and work, this you shall do. And that every year you should take care of the

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census at the feast of saint Martin [and give] five *solidi* to the monastery Weissenburg. After your death they shall revert entirely to us and to our successors without the intercession of any judge.

This *precaria* was made on the day before the calends of February in the twentieth year of the reign of our king Charles.

Witnesses: Ermbert who ordered this *precaria* to be done. Signed deacon Gerbert, Wurmhari, Waldrih, Hruothard, Erming, Helphand.

I Hildiboto wrote this up.

B. TRADITIONES WIZENBURGENSES NO. 196A, UNDATED AND UNTITLED

[The judgement against Rodoin and Gebahart]

Isti sunt testes de illa re, quam Rodoinus tradidit ad monasterium Uuizenburg et postea cum omnibus istis presentibus testibus in nostram reuertit postestatem. Quod filii eius, id est Gebehartus et Rodoinus, non recte voluerunt habere, sicut in testamento pleniter expressum est. Hoc est inter Aquilam et Mittibrunnen illam siluam et illam ecclesiam in monte qui dicitur Berg et quicquid ad illam pertinet medietatem, in mancipiis et in ceteris. Et hi sunt testes: Otacar, ille qui in palatio rectum agit. Ipse mandauit Althelme, ut ipse, sicut omnes nouerant, illam rem requireret, quod ita factum est. Hec sunt nomina testium: Althelm. Herimuat. Theothoh. Rodoinus. Uuicrat. Sinduni. Otini. Eggibald. Uuicrat. Otacar. Uualarunc. Rathelm. Antuni. Irambertus. Racheri. Adalman. Uuinidheri. Hartini. Madalger. Lantheri. Ruadung. Ludiger. Theathad. Uadalbald. Heliboto. Erih. Erhart. Gerbraht. Snarung. Ludimunt. Theathart.

Translation:

These are the witnesses of that property, which Rodoin gave to the monastery Weissenburg and [which] after that with all those witnesses present reverted into our power, because his sons, that is Gebahart and Rodoin, do not wish to hold [it] justly, as is plainly expressed in the document. This is that forest between the Eichel and Mittelbrunn and that church on the mount which is called Berg, and whatever pertains to that half in labourers and other things. And these are the witnesses: Otacar, the person who does justice in the palace. He ordered Althelm, so that he [i.e. Althelm], as all acknowledged, inquired into that affair, which was thus done. These are the names of the witnesses: Althelm, Herimuat, Theothoh, Rodoin, Wicrat, Sinduni, Otini, Eggibald, Wicrat, Otacar, Walarunc, Rathelm, Antuni, Irambertus, Racheri, Adalman, Winidheri, Hartini, Madalger, Lantheri, Ruadung, Ludigar, Theathad, Wadalbald, Heliboto, Erih, Erhart, Gerbraht, Snarung, Ludimunt, Theathart.

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